A critical study of Thomas Middleton's borrowings and of his imitations of other authors in his prose, poetry and dramatic work.

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF THOMAS MIDDLETON'S BORROWINGS AND OF HIS IMITATIONS OF OTHER AUTHORS IN HIS PROSE, POETRY AND DRAMATIC WORK.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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ABSTRACT

Thomas Middleton is one of the most elusive of writers. T. S. Eliot felt that he was merely a name connecting six or seven great plays, a man with no fear, no sentiment and no message. I have sought to bring together the materials which attracted his dramatic imagination, and to make some assessment of his adaptation and contribution to those materials. There is no simple pattern in his work. He is, however, usually at his best when he has a story to follow, one which he has thoroughly assimilated. His weakest plays, the tragicomedies, seem to result from following romantic materials in a desultory manner. In approaching his works through his sources, I feel that I have been brought closer to a revaluation of the dramatist. Not only is he the consummate ironist recent scholars have mainly been concerned to point out, but he is also a man who, in reacting against probable Calvinist influence early in his life, neverthe-less remained a moralist of a sophisticated kind. All the relevant information about his early years is therefore introduced, together with a few new facts, in the opening chapter. In later chapters, all suggestions for his sources are analysed and discussed, and some inaccurate ones are rejected. Finally, four appendices give various information about non-canonical plays, plays difficult to date, and plays whose sources are not yet fully known.

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A work of this kind needs no introduction ; a source-study is self-explanatory. Yet I have aimed at doing slightly more : I have attempted to put the plays into a fresh order, one which will bring out the growth of certain types of characterisation more clearly. To this end I have re-dated No Wit, No Help Like A Woman's and The Witch, and re-allocated certain plays to years other than those they are often given. Of course, I have done this only when the evidence for any date was weak.

The brief recounting of plots and tales must be one of the dullest forms of writing known to man. I have therefore avoided telling the source story and then the play story on every occasion, sometimes splicing the two narratives to bring them into close conjunction.

I think I may have achieved two objects in the course of this work : firstly, I have identified some new sources, for Your Five Gallants, A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, The Witch, More Dissemblers Besides Women and A Game at Chesse, which have enabled me to see more clearly Middleton's processes of thought ; and secondly, I have proved to my own satisfaction that in his adaptations Middleton is markedly a moralist. This has been denied by some critics. Even in adapting the cynical motif of the fake potion from Machiavelli's La Mandragola, Middleton did not use the idea of the seduction of a virtuous wife. I should add here that two friends were responsible for the suggestions about Andrea Calmo's La Potione and the Roxburghe Ballad mentioned in the Addendum.

The equipment with which I set out to undertake this task turned out to be hopelessly inadequate. Middleton read Italian rather easily, and certain German scholars treated the sources of his major plays quite fully at the end of the nineteenth century. I knew neither language. My thanks are due therefore to Mr. F. M. Guercio of King's College for teaching me some Italian ; and I am indebted to various friends for help with Karl Christ's pioneering study of Middleton's sources.

My main debt of gratitude, however, is due to Dr. W. A. Armstrong, my supervisor during the writing of a large part of this study. His attention to presentation and the correct expression of relationships between sources and plays was a constant guide when I revised my first drafts. Even so, I am well aware that the consistency his comments called for has still not been achieved at all points.

This dissertation was written in two capitals, London and Washington D.C. My stay in the latter city, working day by day in the splendid Folger Shakespeare Library, was due to the suggestion and help of Mr. J. W. Crow and the generosity of Dr. L. B. Wright, the Director. Of the many scholars who helped to dispel youthful error and illusion I have space to mention only Dr. G. E. Dawson, who frequently gave me profitable advice.

Another great source of helpfulness was the loan by the Shakespeare Institute Library at Birmingham of a copy of M. J. Taylor's Annotated Bibliography of Thomas Middleton 1940-61, appended to his doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Birmingham in 1963. This work takes over where Samuel Tannenbaum's bibliography leaves off ; as a result, I may claim there are few Middleton items I have not seen. I have treated theses as books rather than articles in citing them ; in many cases typescript editions are as good as printed ones.

Miss Margery Fisher was kind enough to mail to me her Oxford thesis, twin editions of A Chaste Maid and Women Beware Women, submitted in 1937, for use over an indefinite period. Such unsolicited generosity is, happily, a feature of the scholarly world which I hope one day to enter. Last but not least, I must thank my American typist, Miss Judith W. Duryea, whose spelling may never be the same again.

**

List of Abbreviations for Periodicals

HLQ = Huntington Library Quarterly. Published by the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery at San Marino, California.

JEGP = Journal of English and Germanic Philology. Published by the University of Illinois Press at Urbana, Illinois.

MLN = Modern Language Notes. Published by Johns Hopkins Press at Baltimore, Maryland.

MLQ = Modern Language Quarterly. Published by the University of Washington at Seattle, Washington.

MLR = Modern Language Review. Published by the Modern Humanities Research Association at Cambridge, England.

MP = Modern Philology. Published by the University of Chicago Press at Chicago, Illinois.

NQ = Notes and Queries. Published by Oxford University Press.

PBSA = Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America.

PMLA = Papers of the Modern Language Association.

PQ = Philological Quarterly. Published by the University of Iowa at Iowa City.

RES = Review of English Studies. Published by the Clarendon Press at Oxford.

RN = Renaissance News. Published by the Renaissance Society of America at New York.

RR = Romanic Review. Published by Columbia U.P. at New York.

SB = Studies in Bibliography. Published by the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Virginia.

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SP = Studies in Philology. Published by the University of North Carolina Press at Chapel Hill, N.C.

SQ = Shakespeare Quarterly. Published by the Shakespeare Association of America at New York.

SS = Shakespeare Survey. Published by Cambridge University Press at Cambridge, England.

TLS = Times Literary Supplement. Published by The Times, London.

NB. English Studies is the same publication as Essays and Studies. It employed the former title in 1948 and 1949 only. Published by the English Association.

The place-name "Cambridge" is always England unless followed by "Massachusetts".

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CHAPTER ONE

Moral and Religious Young Poet

A writer of genius may be born at any time, in any place, and despite overwhelming difficulty .succeed in expressing himself, his age and certain aspects of the profoundest truths of human life. For a talented writer it is a very different story ; if he is born Philip Sidney, of noble blood, enlightened parentage, and heir to landed estates, he will constantly find himself amidst exciting scenes of political moment and amongst persons of contemporary and probably historical significance. When such a man writes, there is time enough and a sense of critical standard to ensure that his talent will find adequate and apt expression. But if he is born Thomas Middleton, of working-class parents in an unfashionable part of London, it may be a long time before he realises which influences are important and which themes are permanently popular. Refinements such as a love for the cultivation of flowers and trees, seasons and landscapes, may be foreign to everyone around him. And such a man may never win for himself time enough to express his viewpoint, through the concentration of his talent, adequately.

Even so, when the child of William and Anne Middleton was christened Thomas on 18 April 1580, the prospects before him were not unpromising. Until Thomas was 5 the Middleton household was maintained by the steady industry of his father, who was a bricklayer. After his death on 20 January 1585/6, a long period of disturbance in the boy's life began. £56.0.0d[1] was set aside by William Middleton's will which Anne Middleton made up to £66.13.4d or 100 marks for Thomas, and the same for his sister Avis, who was two years younger. Trouble did not begin immediately, but sometime in the November of 1586. Mrs. Middleton must have found

1. Mark Eccles, "Thomas Middleton a Poett," SP, LIV (1957), 517.

widowhood lonely, for she was only forty-eight years old, and she married, on 7 November, Thomas Harvey of St. Dioniss.[2] Harvey was a grocer who had gone adventuring to Roanoke under Ralegh's colonization scheme, and when he came back in July 1586 he was penniless.[3] He craftily entered into the marriage with the mild contentment of a man well satisfied, but within a week or so of the wedding he demanded all the writings concerning William Middleton's property dealings. These dealings look a little complex, doubtless because of the quaint expression they receive in Elizabethan documents. They amount to this : the sum left to Thomas and Avis was to be paid when each came of age, but would then be worth £25 due to disbursments on their upbringing. In 1577 William Middleton had bought a fifty-year lease on the Curtain Close in Shoreditch (land which was part of the ground called the Curtain where plays were performed), which was worth a considerable rent after he had improved property on it and let it out, and at the same time he bought the lease of a house and wharf in Limehouse.[4] Three legal advisers of the Inner Temple informed Harvey that Anne had conveyed all her property to them in trust, and then some of it had been reconveyed to Anne for ten years and the remainder to Thomas and Avis.

Anne then played "a particularly ingenious and nasty trick"[5] on her new husband. Eight or ten days after the marriage she had herself arrested in Lord Mayor's Court for the children's shares of the property, forcing Harvey to pay them into Guildhall. Harvey was then compelled by this cunning scheme to "suffer his goodes to be sould at An outcrye at his doore."[6] Middle-

2. Eccles, p.519.
3. Though he claimed he brought into the Middleton house upon his marriage goods in plate, in ready money, household stuff, and merchandize, to the value of at least £50. (M.G. Christian, "A Sidelight on the Family History of Thomas Middleton," SP,XLIV (1947), 492.)
4. Said to be in the manor of Stebunheath (Stepney?) in a documeht quoted by Christian, p.490.
5. R.H. Barker, Thomas Middleton (New York, 1958),p3.
6. Eccles, p.520.

.ton remembered this incident : "I'll sell all at an out-cry" says Sir Oliver Kix during a stormy quarrel with his wife in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, III.iii.75.[7]

By the time Thomas was twelve, his step-father was in prison for the second time--the first round of Middleton-Harvey litigation had put Harvey into prison for some time. In the meantime, in 1589, Harvey had been away again, to Portugal and the Low Countries. Whilst away he had sent for money, but Anne had refused him.[8] This second stretch of prison was due to debts. It seems likely that Anne could have helped Harvey out of this sentence but that she did not care to. Everything gets rather muddled for a time after this. On 30 September 1595 Thomas Harvey was brought up on a charge of trying to poison his wife Anne. He went into Newgate for this.[9] Yet Phialas[10] quotes a deposition by Harvey to the effect that he left England in 1594 and remained out of England for five years. Then again, someone had heard that Harvey said he had obtained Middleton's fellowship at Oxford for him. Another assertion of Harvey's was that he was worth £500 at the time of his marriage. Harvey was doubtless a liar or a romancer or both ; he was also criminal if the charge of poisoning has any substance. Middleton was perhaps thinking of these attempts by Harvey to get his hands on the money and property left by William Middleton when he wrote, in 1604 :

> Another set of delicate knaves there are, that dive into deeds and writings of lands left to young gullfinches, poisoning the true sense and intent of them with the

7. All quotations for Middleton's works will be from The Works of Thomas Middleton ed. A.H. Bullen in eight volumes (London, 1885-6), except where otherwise indicated.
8. Christian, "Sidelight," p.494.
9. Eccles, "Middleton a Poett," p.522.
10. "Middleton's Early Contact with the Law," SP, LII (1955), 192.

> merciless antimony of the Common Law, and so by some crafty clause or two shove the true foolish owners quite beside the saddle of their patrimonies....
>
> (The Black Book, VIII,20-21).

From 1596 to 1599 Harvey was away at sea, and was reported to be dead. The question of Anne's marrying John Knapp, to whom Harvey had sealed a deed of all property which had belonged to William Middleton, was even mooted (February, 1596/7).

It is in the context of these meagre facts that we have to locate Middleton's first poem, The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased. It was published in 1597 by Valentine Sims, but its 4,200-odd lines must have taken at least a year to compose. There are two interesting features about the poem which comment on Middleton's kind of seriousness : firstly, the phenomenon of a sixteen-year-old not only contemplating such a pious and ambitious work but actually executing it ; secondly, its relationship to Middleton's early reading and religious faith.

The fact that Middleton turned to the Bible for his source perhaps implies he belonged to a church in Shoreditch. An inspection of Bibles available at the time reveals that he used[11] a copy of the Geneva Bible dating from 1560, translated by William Whittingham with assistance from Anthony Gilby and Thomas Sampson. "Because of its connections with Calvinism," writes Thompson, "it was especially favored by the Puritans." The Matthew version dating from 1537 runs thus at XI.15 of The Wisdom of Solomon :

> or cruell beastes of a straunge kynde, such as are vnknowen, or spoute fyre, or caste oute a smokynge breth, or shote horrible sparkes oute of their eyes.
>
> (The boke of wisedome, Fol.xlj^{v}, from a copy of 1551).

11. See Craig R. Thompson, The Bible in English 1525-1611 (Washington, D.C., 1958), pp.8-12.

The text is not numbered into verses yet. Middleton may have used a translation I have not seen, The volume of the bokes called Apocripha (1549), although Geneva is so close that it seems unlikely it is not the source :

> Or furious beasts newly created, and vnknowen, which shulde breathe out blastes of fyre, and cast out smoke as a tempest, or shoote horrible sparkes like lightnings out of their eyes.
> (From a copy of 1560, STC 2093)

Compare Middleton :

> Newly created beasts, which sight ne'er saw,
> Unknown, which neither eye nor ear did know,
> To breathe out blasts of fire against their law,
> And cast out smoke with a tempestuous blow;
> Making their eyes the chambers of their fears,
> Darting forth fire as lightning from the spheres.
> (Chapter XI, stanza 15).

A Bishops' version of 1575 I have seen follows the Matthew version exactly ; so does a Great Bible of 1566. Here is the rendering of the Douai translators :

> or vnknowen beasts ful of anger of a new kind; or breathing the vapour of fires, or casting forth the sauour of smoke, or shooting horrible sparkes from their eies.
> (From a copy of 1610, p. 358)

Most Elizabethan households would in all probability have owned either a Geneva or a Bishops' Bible, yet perhaps a small clue to Middleton's religious upbringing may be indicated. The chances are that the Bible in the Middleton household was the reprint by Christopher Barker with concordances,[12] which contains material based on Calvin's theology in the middle. There is a dialogue on the doctrine of predestination and the use of the word and sacraments. Here the doctrine of the elect is expounded in a straight-

12. I used a copy of 1583, not listed in STC ; it is located in King's College London.

forward form : "Some are vessels of wrath ordained vnto destruction" (f.439) and as one can see, it left traces in the poem.

There are perhaps some reasons why Middleton should have chosen this Apocryphal wisdom book to paraphrase. It was regarded by Bible expositors as elegant in style (the exposition I examined is in Latin, by Nicolaus de Lyra, printed at Basle in 1502. Luther[13] knew de Lyra's work, although Middleton undoubtedly did not) ; its Greek sententiae were considered more profound than Hebrew ones ; and, along with Ecclesiasticus, it was read as purely moral among the Apocryphal books. Solomon himself was believed to be the principal author, and Philo merely the compiler of his wise sayings.

The Wisdom of Solomon is very uneven work, modern scholars[14] holding that after XI.4 another and inferior hand takes over, and certainly the tedious repetitiveness of this uninspired moralist[15] is responsible for much of Middleton's bathos. The earlier writer, believed to be a Hellenistic Jew, gives autobiographical details of how he began to seek wisdom in his youth, which teaches men all the virtues (VII.7). My own view is that the sixteen-year-old Middleton was encouraged to write on a religious subject, and also encouraged to dedicate the poem to Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, perhaps by some pious elder. In 1595 Thomas Churchyard had dedicated a religious poem to Essex. Paraphrases of all kinds from the Bible were popular, Spenser having made paraphrases (now lost) of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs and Drayton of the Song of Solomon in 1591.

The form of the stanza which Middleton chose was the same as in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis (1593)—decasyllabic six-line stanzas,

13. It was Luther, of course, who first separated out the Apocrypha from the Old Testament (1534).
14. See E.J. Goodspeed, The Apocrypha (New York, 1959), p.xxiii.
15. De Lyra (Opera tom. 6 cum glossa ordinaria & Interlin. additionibus Pauli Burgens. & Replicis Matth. Thoringi (Basle, 1502), f.384v) admits that the author of Wisdom frequently repeats the same idea in different words.

a-b-a-b-c-c. The final couplet is designed to give point to the narrative of the previous lines. Even the dedicatory epistle echoes Shakespeare's. The diction itself shows strong traces of Euphuism, as for instance in the constant opposition of "shadow" to "substance" (II.18, VI.13, IX.7, XI.14, and so on), which can be found in Lyly's Euphues.[16] Middleton also lifted a passage from Marlowe's Edward II (V.i.11-22) at XVI.12. The style, however, persistently attempts to be lyrical despite the source-material.

In VI.14 there is a bitter outburst against feminine attractiveness, for which there is no warrant in The Wisedome of Solomon :

> The far-fet chastity of female sex
> Is nothing but allurement into lust,
> Which will forswear and take, scorn and annex,
> Deny and practise it, mistrust and trust .

At least, I say no warrant because the Wisedome passage runs simply :

> [Wisdome] preuenteth them that desire her, that she may first shew herselfe vnto them.
> (VI.13)

Perhaps there lies behind this the Calvinist idea that "by lust more enkindled since the fall of man, we are become doubly subiect to desire the companie of women, except it be those whome God of hys singular grace hath exempted from it..."[17], and some rather harsh experiences at home of trust and mistrust. Shortly after follows a very concrete account of Wisdom's wooing of a young man :

> She man-like woos, men women-like refuse
> She offers love, they offer'd love deny....
> (VI.17)

16. E.g. on p.6 of James Winny's edition of Euphues in The Descent of Euphues (Cambridge, 1957).
17. Calvin's The Institution of Christian Religion, trans. T.N. (1562), f.125^{v}.

Here perhaps Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis (73-78 and 133-138), two passages in which Venus woos Adonis, is uppermost in Middleton's mind rather than the Wisedome passage ; although this kind of inverted relationship is rather frequent in Middleton's plays. Further, in paraphrasing XII.23, which mentions God's punishment of the wicked who have lived a dissolute life, Middleton writes :

> God tortures both, the mistress and the man,
> And ends in pain, that which in life began.
> (XII.23)

He was obviously preoccupied by the idea that guilty sex is the province of women, who often seduce unwilling mankind, and that illicit sex ends in pain.

Middleton's knowledge of the Old Testament was sketchy. The two writers of The Wisedome of Salomon have a way of not mentioning the name of an Old Testament hero in describing some incident he was famous for. In X.9-11 Middleton assumes the allusion to a righteous man who fled before his brother's wrath, and was later pardoned, to be Cain. The allusion is actually to Jacob.

The poem often verges on the unintelligible, and has all the earnestness of youth together with its incoherence. Yet it is clearly the work of a moralist, whose lyrical power is small. Middleton again and again shows these characteristics in his early work, together with a marked interest in sex.

Middleton turned again to Shakespeare in his second poem, The Ghost of Lucrece (1600). At least J.Q. Adams[18] suggests this poem came next, although Micro-Cynicon is dated 1599. On grounds of the relative maturity shown in each poem, this seems likely. Each of these two first poems, the paraphrase and The Ghost of Lucrece, was printed by Valentine Sims. Middleton went up to Oxford in 1598, but this lament shows no trace of the influence which Micro-

18. The Ghost of Lucrece, ed. J.Q. Adams (New York and London, 1937), pp.xxi-xxiii.

Cynicon does, an influence which is realistic, satiric and harsh. He was obviously excited by the sparkling imagery of Shakespeare's Rape of Lucrece (1594), and this sent him in search of classical references and highly-coloured phrases. Although he might have gone to Ovid, Livy, or some sixteenth-century English translator, Middleton decided there was no story to tell and simply borrowed imagery from Robert Greene's novel Tullies Loue (1589).[19] There is occasional borrowing from The Rape of Lucrece—the form of the stanza comes from that poem, a-b-a-b-b-c-c—and the idea of the lament, Adams suggests, may be from Samuel Daniel's Complaint of Rosamond (1592). Daniel uses the same stanza form as Shakespeare and Middleton ; from his poem Middleton derived the framework of the plea to Rhamnusia for revenge, although The Complaint of Rosamond is not a story of rape proper but one of inveiglement into sin.

The Lucrece theme[20] had enjoyed some popularity in Renaissance literature ; Boccaccio and Chaucer treated it, and a ballad called The grievious complaynt of Lucrece (1568, lost) had evidently cast it in the form of a lament. Bandello's version was translated by W. W. in 1580, according to M.A. Scott,[21] and William Painter translated Livy's account in The Pallace of Pleasure (1566). Middleton certainly had enough Latin, acquired at the Grammar School (I shall have a few comments to make on Middleton's schooling below), to pen a dedicatory poem to The Ghost of Lucrece in Latin ; nevertheless, he chose not to use a Latin source. The mythological allusions which he adds are all from Greene, and are obviously designed to embellish and enrich the poem :

19. This source was first identified in J.Q. Adams' edition of The Ghost, p.6.
20. See G. Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare (London & New York, 1957), I, 179-183.
21. Elizabethan Translations from the Italian (Boston & New York, 1916), p.41. The translation is lost.

Medea's magic, and Calipso's drugs,
Circe's enchantments, Hecate's triform,
Weans my soul....
(The Ghost of Lucrece, 1-3)[22]

Middleton begins, following Flavia's wishful regret :

Had I Medeas magicke, the drugs of Calipso, the inchauntments of Cyrces, the skill of Hecate....
(Tullies Loue (1589), p.26)

J.Q. Adams gives in the footnotes to his edition some thirty borrowings from Greene's novel, and of The Rape of Lucrece there are also a few reminiscences :

baptizer of mine infant lines
With golden water in a silver font.
(The Dedication, 5-6)

These two lines recall ll.60-61 of Shakespeare's poem :

Which virtue gave the golden age to gild
Their silver cheeks, and call'd it then their shield.[23]

In describing the fearful Lucrece stifling an outcry, Middleton writes :

the hammer of my soul
That beats upon my breath and strikes a strain.
(170-171)

Shakespeare thus describes Tarquin on his stealthy mission :

Anon his beating heart, alarum striking....
(433)

Not all of Middleton's figures came off, however ; in ll.234-297 there is an extended attempt

22. All quotations from J.Q. Adams' edition.
23. Quotations from F.T. Prince's Arden edition of The Poems (London, 1960).

to invest Lucrece's chaste occupation, spinning, with some metaphysical significance. Painter, in his version,[24] mentions that Lucrece was occupied in spinning at home with her maids when Collatine first surprised her, and Middleton makes the women a trio so that he can identify them with the three Moirai (Fates).[25] The spinning wheel becomes a fatal wheel, fatal because its virtuous employment is a token of Lucrece's chastity, as opposed to the "Roman dames"—the wives of Collatine's friends—whose looser morals were evidenced by their dancing (1.290). The figure falls apart when Middleton tries to associate Fortune's wheel going round in favour of Vesta's servant[26] (1.238) with the fatal spinning of the thread of life. Lucrece seems in this passage to be almost deified for her chastity (11.281-282) ; yet when her chastity is outraged, Middleton makes her blame herself (11.449-450). In The Ghost of Lucrece alone of all the versions of the Lucrece story I have seen does Lucrece blame herself for not seeing through Tarquin's dissembled purpose, and in no other version is Lucrece sentenced to Hell because Tarquin has corrupted her honour. Like Daniel's Rosamond, who has returned to the mortal scene to persuade a Muse to record her "fairness" and have her instated into her rightful Elysium, Lucrece's ghost has on her appearance to request she may be "colour[ed] with chastity" (1.494). Whether true to the tradition or not, Lucrece winds up as a seducer, bringing the rape on herself because of her feminine allure. Again, the guilty sexual experience ends in pain for both parties. Lucrece is Middleton's first portrayal of a mature married woman, the kind of woman who often fascinates and attracts a younger man in Middleton's dramas. Sometimes the husbands of these women are absent, sometimes dead, and sometimes they die or are believed to have died in the course of the play. But Lucrece is also a split personality in Middleton's

24. The Pallace of Pleasure (1566), I, f.5. The detail is not in Shakespeare.
25. The fatal sisters are connected with Lucrece in Richard Robinson's The Rewarde of Wickednesse (1574), $D4^{v}$.
26. Lucrece's role as a vestal disciple presumably springs from the fact that Terentia, in Greene's novel, is an unmarried virgin.

imagination, for he thinks of her occasionally as a girl, a vestal virgin ; this is the idealized side of womanhood, although Middleton's virginal girls are not self-righteous, however often unintentionally priggish. For, as Calvin said, "Virginitie... is a vertue not to be despised,"[27] and Middleton is intent on demonstrating its ideality in The Ghost of Lucrece. Yet it is an unattained ideal, an ideal which even as it is celebrated yields no joy. The emphasis is on the appeal for restoration to a lost Golden Age of virtue, an appeal which fails : "Now ... Lucrece [meets] with Tarquin, in the hall of hell!" is the last line of the main poem. Shakespeare's poem, on the other hand, speaks of the noble triumph of stoic chastity, of the vindication of fidelity :

> by chaste Lucrece' soul that late complained
> .....
> We will revenge the death of this true wife.
> (11.1839, 1841)

Middleton dedicated this poem to William, second Baron Compton, a Master of Arts, who enjoyed considerable prominence at Court and had engineered an enviable marriage with a millionaire's only daughter.[28] Nothing came of the plea for patronage in the dedication, evidently, and when Middleton had just after embarked on his Oxford career, he took the occasion to satirise Compton's parsimony.[29] At least, the passage in Father Hubburd's Tales about the London scholar sounds autobiographical. Compton was not a known patron of writers and in any case was not entirely mentally stable.

What was Middleton doing until April, 1598, when he was matriculated from Queen's College, Oxford? There is no record ; but there is a slight amount of evidence to show Middleton completed his time at a Grammar School. Normally

27. The Institution of Christian Religion, trans. T.N. (1562), f.125v.
28. J.Q. Adams' edition, pp.xxiv-xxv.
29. J.Q. Adams' edition, p.xxx.

a boy went to school until he was fifteen[30] ; John Brinsley[31] considered no boy should be sent to the University until he was that age. Jonson went to school until he was seventeen, and Middleton may have done so, but until some evidence turns up the years 1595-98 remain unaccounted for.[32]

Middleton tells us about several books he used in his school career, and he quotes from others. John D. Reeves[33] shows that Middleton's memory was stored with fragments of William Lily's Propria quae maribus, a book begun in the second form, and continued to the fourth. Virgil was also read in the fourth form. In the fifth form Cicero's letters were used, and Ovid in the seventh. Cordier was also used, evidently in a lower form. Mathurin Cordier's colloquies (1564) "were especially acceptable to many readers because of their author's connection with Calvin and Geneva."[34] Middleton in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside mentions the following books : Cato's Distichs and Cordier's Colloquia (IV.i.238), as in use at Eton ; Virgil (IV.iii.38) ; Cicero's epistolary style (IV.i.107) ; Ovid's De Tristibus ("principal pure Latin") (V.iii.38). In the same play he also includes a long disputation in Latin, but that obviously comes from his Oxford days.

Meanwhile, after writing the two poems, Middleton had obviously made arrangements to go to Oxford. He went to Queen's College, as he tells us in a semi-autobriographical way in The Triumphs of Love and Antiquity (1619),[35] and ...

30. C.R. Thompson, Schools in Tudor England (Washington, D.C., 1958), p.15.
31. Cited from M. St. Clare Byrne, Elizabethan Life in Town and Country (London, 1961), p.230ff.
32. Although the amount of imagery drawn from the theatre and the stage in Middleton's early work suggests some intimacy with the theatre before going up to Oxford. Of course, he lived near the Curtain for years.
33. "Thomas Middleton and Lily's Grammar : Some Parallels," NQ, CXCVII (February, 1952), 75-76.
34. Thompson, Schools, p.19.
35. M.G. Christian, " An Autobriographical Note by Thomas Middleton," NQ, CLXXV (October, 1938), 259-260.

Mark Eccles produced documentary proof of the fact[36]. He was matriculated from Queen's on 7 April 1598, aged eighteen. On that date he subscribed to the thirty-nine articles. Eccles thinks that Middleton may have been a battler, i.e. partly self-supporting. However, he did not stay very long at Oxford ; Mildred Christian[37] thought he stayed "three full years" in citing a document which signs away his share in the Curtain and Stebunheath property to pay for maintenance at Oxford. But Mark Eccles[38] showed her conclusions to be fallacious, and added that "Middleton may have left Oxford at any time after 28 June 1600. ...He gave up residence at Oxford between 28 June 1600 and 8 February 1600/1, when Anthony Snode testified that 'he remaynethe heare in London daylie accompaninge the players'". Hence Middleton probably did not take a degree, and years later (ca. 1670) Anthony à Wood[39] mentioned him in a manner which suggests he thought Middleton had no degree :

> 1604 - Tho. Middleton Londinensis Eq. Aurat fil Decr 7.
> ≠ Tho. Middleton the play maker writes himself poeta & Ch. nograph. Londo. in one of his plays.

Wood must have made this entry after he saw Middleton's signature to the commendatory poem he wrote for the 1623 Duchess of Malfi. He put Middleton with the 1604 graduates presumably because he thought that the latest date at which the poet could have been there. He found no record of a degree, however. There are other entries (in Edward Rowe Mores' Collections) which may refer to the poet -- Vol. IV, f.72[40] has simply, for 1597/8, "Mart. 17. Tho. Middleton, Lond. pl. f. -- 18." If this is our man, he came up a month before subscription. What did he study ? Mores' Collections relating to Queen's College (MS. Gough Oxon. 17)

36. "Middleton's Birth and Education," RES, VII (1931), 436-437.
37. "Middleton's Residence at Oxford," MLN, LXI (1946), 90-91.
38. "Middleton a Poett," p. 525.
39. Wood's MSS. E.5. in the Bodleian Library; found in Vol.V, f.105 of E. R. Mores' Collections (MS. Gough Oxon. 16).
40. MS. Gough Oxon. 15.

indicate that of the "Inceptores" in 1597 the large majority studied "Art.". Here is the entry[41]:

	Th.	Iur.	Med.	Mus.	Art.
Inceptores in 1597	9	3	-	-	48

The chances are that Middleton studied neither theology nor jurisprudence, but was an Arts man. "The Elizabethan Arts course was based firmly on the old medieval *trivium* and *quadrivium*. In his first two years an undergraduate studied mostly rhetoric and Aristotelian logic and some arithmetic and music," says C. R. Thompson.[42] Middleton tells us about it :

> I ... sucked the honey of wit from the flowers of Aristotle--steeped my brain in the smart juice of logic, that subtle virtue ... (*Father Hubburd's Tales*, VIII, 103).

Middleton learned some Greek too while he was at Oxford, as *Micro-Cynicon* testifies. In 1582 a Greek lecturer had been appointed at Queen's; the original lectureship had been set up in 1535. "After his second year," writes C. R. Thompson, "each student took part in a stated number of disputations in college and in public."[43] So Tim and his Tutor argue about rational animals--a "logical disputation," hence a beginner's disputation--in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, IV.i. 1-24.

Mores' Collections mention a few of the men at Queen's about Middleton's time ; Thomas Ravis was Vice-Chancellor after 1596, and in 1596 Henry Airay took over the Provostship from Henry Robinson. Airay was a "champion of the

41. From Vol. VI ; the recto of the leaf is marked 13. and 16.
42. *Universities in Tudor England* (Washington, D.C., 1959), p.9.
43. *Universities*, p.19.

evangelical Calvinism"[44] and his sermons were inclined to Calvinistic views. One man Middleton may have encountered was Richard Crakanthorpe, fellow from 1591 to 1605, who was a lecturer in Logic. He wrote two textbooks, the Introductio in Metaphysicam[45] (1619) and Logicae libri quinque (1622), perhaps the fruit of years of teaching. Later, in 1625, he opposed Mark Antony de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalatro. R.H. Hodgkin[46] says he built up a reputation for Queen's as a place where logic was well taught. He even refers to Chaucer in his Introductio (p.89)—obviously Crakanthorpe was not just a dull Latinist.

Middleton lost his fellowship sometime before 8 February 1601, due to events relating to his family in London. It is not quite clear he held a fellowship, as the Londoner, John Kyrby, who used the term, probably would not have known a fellowship from a scholarship. Absence from Oxford was doubtless the cause, as Middleton had had to come home[47] in order to aid his mother against his brother-in-law, whilst Harvey was away. This brother-in-law, Allen Waterer, had replaced Harvey as trouble-maker-in-chief for the Middletons when he married Avis, Thomas' sister. From 1598 on Harvey was back in London. Avis married Waterer in 1598 and Anne Harvey allowed them to live with her. Not long after they tried to throw her out. Waterer had quarrelled with Anne about thos bones of contention, the lands and tenements leased by the deceased elder Middleton.

In 1598, and then again in the summer of 1599, Middleton was home. As mentioned, Middleton sold his share in the Limehouse pro-

44. J.R. Magrath, The Queen's College (Oxford, 1921), I, 231.
45. Chapter X is called "De Anima Rationali." The book is dedicated to his students.
46. Six Centuries of An Oxford College (Oxford, 1949), p.82. Pp.82-86 are illuminating as to what was being taught in ca. 1600.
47. Eccles, "Middleton a Poett," p.526. See also P.G. Phialas, "Middleton's Early Contact with the Law," SP, LII (1955), 191-192.

perty to remain at Oxford—to Waterer, 3 December 1599. Then on 28 June 1600[48] he conveyed his share in the Curtain property for more money to keep going, again to Waterer. When Harvey in 1600 was giving testimony about his right to a share in the inheritance, in a suit brought against Thomas Middleton, Allen and Roger Waterer, he describes how he and Waterer actually fought at the garden in Hollywell Lane. Finally, Middleton was a defendant in a chancery suit brought by Thomas Dawson and Andrew Blakesly in 1600.[49] Waterer was so incensed by Harvey's suits that he was bound over to keep the peace, but it did no good—he nearly killed Harvey in June, 1601. Waterer died in the severe year of plague, 1603, and Avis remarried ; Thomas and Anne Harvey were also dead by 1603. Sometime between 1601 and 1603 Middleton had himself taken a wife, Mary Marbeck,* who had connections with actors,[50] and by 8 February 1601 he was "in London daylie accompaninge the players."

It is in this context of study in Oxford and appearances in court in London that Middleton's next poem was written, Micro-Cynicon (1599), which seems certainly, on grounds of style, to be later than The Ghost of Lucfece. Clearly Joseph Hall's Virgidemiae (1597) was the main inspiration, although the more specialised portraits of different types of humours and perverts in Marston's The Scourge of Villanie (1598) led Middleton to write a mixed satire. Partly it imitates Hall's type of satire—satire which mourns for the lost Golden Age in a dignified manner—and partly Marston's, harsh, obscure, and involving the satirist in the situations depicted. Admiration for Hall meant two important realizations for Middleton : firstly, that what he had been doing was threadbare and outmoded :

48. M.G. Christian, "A Sidelight on the Family History of Thomas Middleton," SP, XLIV (1947), 496.
49. Details in Eccles, "Middleton a Poett," p.530.
50. R.H. Barker, Thomas Middleton (New York, 1958), p. 9.

* But see p.24 ; there is some doubt about the form of her name.

> Another ...
> Vrgeth his melting Muse with solemne teares
> Rime of some dreerie fates, of lucklesse peeres.
> Then brings he vp some branded whining ghost....
> (Virgidemiae, Satire V, 1-5)[51]

. . . . . .

and secondly, that satiric characterisation provided a means of protection against his own sense of inadequacy.

Micro-Cynicon did not last long ; by 4 June 1599 it had been burned in the yard of Stationers' Hall along with the satires of Marston, Guilpin and others. At the same time certain erotic poems and a satirical panegyric called The XV ioyes of marriage, which gave Middleton some details for A Chaste Maid in Cheapside later, were destroyed by the order of the Archbishop of Canterbury.[52] The printer of Middleton's "Snarling Satyres" was placed under caution.

Micro-Cynicon, although it mixed kinds by identifying the satirist, for example, as a gull who fell for Pyander's transvestite disguise, is a work which fits John Peter's[53] definition of "Satyre," i.e. invective with "bewailment" mingled in it. Everard Guilpin scolded his Muse for falling "from brawling to a blubbering passion" (Skialetheia [1598], C3). The impetus behind the satires reminds one of the Juvenalian ethos,[54] the poor honest man in a diseased society, with its gallery of mean privileged people and disgusting crimes. Satire I, however, has a theme akin to Horace's first satire in Book I, although Hall's Satire I, Liber III

51. Quotation from Collected poems of Joseph Hall, ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool, 1949).
52. A transcript of the registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 A.D., ed. E. Arber (London, 1875-94), III, 316.
53. Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature (Oxford, 1956), p.109.
54. R.M. Alden in The Rise of Formal Satire in England (Philadelphia, 1899), p.159, compares part of Satire III (the cross mistress) with Juvenal VI, 456ff.

is undoubtedly the intermediary. It is an impressionistic judgment, but Hall does seem the chief source for the ideas employed by Middleton in Micro-Cynicon. The "Defiance to Envy" is clearly an imitation of Hall. Whereas, however, Hall (and Marston) attack the extravagance of man's clothing, Middleton attacks women's, in Satire III ; and in the last three satires, especially IV and V, Middleton is on his own territory— connycatching and fraud by disguise. Satire V's Pyander is an interesting figure, no doubt drawn with help from Marston's depiction of the transvestite type in Certain Satires (1598), Satire II.[55] Pyander is bisexual :

> a man or woman whether,
> I cannot say, she's excellent at either.
> (Satire V, 25-26)

The satirist fell in love with her at one time :

> I'll not burn in hell
> For false Pyander, though I loved him well.
> (ll. 54-55)

Pyander is seductively beautiful, but in the end turns out to be a boy. The lady with the fair face in this case not only deceives the innocent satirist into paying well for no favours, but actually possesses physical masculine characteristics.

After this poem there came dramatic work for Philip Henslowe, which is more conveniently discussed with the first plays at the beginning of the next chapter. Then in 1603 there was a serious outbreak of the plague, which led Middleton to write nondramatic work again. Significantly it is mostly prose, although there is some verse in Father Hubburd's Tales (1604), the earlier of the two pieces written in 1603 and 1604. The story of Philomela and Tereus provides the framework for Father Hubburd's Tales, again a motif wherein chaste womankind

55. Lines 107-126 in Davenport's edition ; compare also John Weever, Epigrammes (1599), $F2^{v}$, "In Pontum."

is defamed. The tone is satiric, or rather satirical complaint, but the disguise of the Ant keeps Middleton well out of sight. The idea of intermixing verse and prose in satire was quite legitimate ; Pierre Le Roy wrote that it could include "also all sortes of writinges ... hauing prose and verse intermixed or mingled therewithall, as if it were powdred neats tongues interlarded" (A Pleasant Satyre or Poesie [1595], $Aa4^{v}$). Middleton explains why the tales have such an odd name :

> Why I call these Father Hubburd's Tales, is not to have them called in again, as the Tale of Mother Hubburd : ... for I entreat here neither of ragged bears or apes, no, nor the lamentable downfall of the old wife's platters,—I deal with no such metal.... ("To the Reader," VIII,53-54)

This reference may be to Spenser's satire (1591), but it has been conjectured that a lost Tale of 1604 is concerned here. Mother Hubburd was a character "well known in the sixteenth century, similar to Tom Thumb and Mother Bunch.... A second Tale of Mother Hubburd, clearly a different one from Spenser's, was referred to in 1604 but its content is not known."[56] Middleton seems, however, to have some acquaintance with Mother Hubburd's Tale : the Ant goes through various transformations as do the Fox and Ape in Spenser's tale, and at one point the Ape is a soldier just as Middleton's Ant is.[57]

56. The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, ed. I. and P. Opie (Oxford, 1951), p.321.
57. Middleton's remarks "To the Reader" may mean that he is not using beast-allegory, although he undoubtedly is in stanza 24. Leicester was a "ragged bear" because his heraldic device was a white bear with a ragged staff ; Burghley's son, Robert Cecil, was attacked by Spenser under the guise of an ape. Spenser's Complaints (1591) was in fact quickly recalled ; for details see A.G. Petti, "Beasts and Politics in Elizabethan Literature," ES, XVI (1963), 85-86.

The Philomela story probably did not come direct from Ovid's Metamorphoses VI, 424-674, but perhaps through an intermediate source in the complaint tradition, such as George Gascoigne's Complaynt of Philomene (1576), which has a pastoral opening resembling Middleton's, though not so good. Middleton may have known it, but he borrowed nothing from it.

Philomel and the Ant are presented in verse ; Philomel had become a nightingale after the rape by Tereus, and Middleton is a "poor submissant" emmet born to work. He falls into the power of the bird, but she mercifully releases him and bids him tell his tale ; however, she asks him not to Euphuize or rail like Nashe. He tells two tales in the first edition, and three in the second (both 1604). He mentions Greene's books on the Art of Conny-catching (VIII, 84) in the first tale, a tale of a young prodigal landowner and his ruin in London's seamier quarters. Middleton needed no sources for this kind of description, nor for the second tale about the maimed soldier home from the wars. The begging scene with the fashionable lady, who barely condescends to toss the soldier a half-penny, is a situation typical of Middleton. The protest which the soldier makes echoes Falstaff's attack on the emptiness of honour in Henry IV, Part I (1598), but the tone is earnest and not ironic :

> Is this the farthest reward of a soldier? is valour and resolution, the two champions of the soul, so slightly esteemed and so basely undervalued? ... are soldiers, then, both food for cannon and misery?
>
> (VIII, 99)

But Middleton does not sentimentalize him ; he simply makes the wretched soldier vanish when the world becomes intolerable.

In his other pamphlet (mainly in prose) of 1604, The Black Book, Middleton used the device of a shape-shifting narrator once again. He tells us what his source is[58] : Pierce Penilesse His Svpplication to the Divell (1592), by Thomas

58. VIII, 9, and he refers at least twice more to it.

Nashe. Nashe gave him his title ; he promised to "be as good as the Blacke Booke"[59] to any who wrote against him. Nashe's "rambling and discursive style" runs like quicksilver from one abuse to another, sketching a scene here and delineating a character there. Even the subjects of Nashe's attacks are used by Middleton, in both of his 1604 pamphlets. The complaint about gold being imprisoned (p.18) is used by Middleton in Father Hubburd's Tales (VIII, 104-108). The differences ... between Pierce Penilesse and The Black Book are greater, however, than the similarities, because of the twelve years separating the two books and the change in tone. Nashe mocks or belittles, and is always going into the attack. Middleton is a less bitter satirist, and always involves himself to some degree in his narrative ; he is not so much sympathetic as more clearly aware that there are two sides to every act of vice, a cause and an effect. He chides Nashe for "Hiding thy better talent in thy spleen" (Father Hubburd's Tales, VIII, 63), and as a result there is something more whimsical, less overtly moralising, about The Black Book. Further, Nashe's work is characterized by a wealth of Latin tags and classical illustrations, for it is the prose of a self-conscious young intellectual inclined to be showy. Middleton, less studious, less irritable, does not invest his vices with any universal significance ; they are very much early seventeenth-century Londoners and hence less terrible.

Nashe's pamphlet gives Middleton little except technique and general inspiration, but the confidence with which Nashe moves amongst the London rogues passes over to Middleton. Nashe has a lively scene where he is in the presence of a school of drinkers (pp.79-80 of Harrison's edition), and Middleton similarly—perhaps with even more skill—depicts himself amongst a school of gamblers (VIII, 29-30). Middleton is in with them, dicing ; Nashe says he remained sober amongst his crew, "onely to note their seuerall humors." As a re-

59. Pierce Penilesse, ed. G.B. Harrison (London and New York, 1924), p.4. Greene also intended to write a "Blacke Booke," which he wrote the "Messenger" for in 1592.

sult of this attitude, Middleton becomes, after 1604, less and less the righteous author inveighing against sin, and more and more ironic about the way it carries its own scourge. The portrait of the pander, a decayed lieutenant, in The Black Book, who cannot make bawdry pay, is a case in point (VIII, 16).

In these early poems and prose, all written before Middleton was twenty-five, we find a strong sense of sin, especially sexual transgression, which is dealt with in various ways. At first he is admonitory, and then he comes more to terms with the fact of sin ; he is satirical about it, and in the two works of 1604, makes the subject more humorous. Finally, in the long "last Will and Testament of Lawrence Lucifer" which winds up The Black Book, the main source of his humour is irony. The change in source-material is directly related to his changes in attitude.

SOURCES AND MAIN INFLUENCES

The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased : The Wisdom of Solomon in the Apocrypha, from the Geneva version of the Bible dating from 1560.

The Ghost of Lucrece : William Shakespeare, The Rape of Lucrece (1594) ; Robert Greene, Tullies Loue (1589).

Micro-Cynicon : Joseph Hall, Virgidemiae (1598) ; John Marston, Certain Satires (1598).

Father Hubburd's Tales : ? Edmund Spenser, Mother Hubberd's Tale (1591) ; ? lost satire on the Jacobean court (cf. VIII, 31), ca. 1604.

The Black Book : Thomas Nashe, Pierce Penilesse His Svpplication to the Divell (1592).

CHAPTER TWO

Henslowe's Hacks and the Vogue of the Boy Players

In the previous chapter the non-dramatic work of Middleton before 1605 was surveyed, but part of the story between 1602-1604 had necessarily to be left out. The last years of the sixteenth century and the turn of the seventeenth brought in a new wave of poet-dramatists who were the successors and supersedes of the University Wits ; a number of them had been to one of the universities themselves. Almost all of them were needy enough to turn professional under contract to Philip Henslowe, theatrical promoter and manager of the Rose theatre. Henslowe's Diary[1] brings the first mention to us in a dramatic connection of Dekker (January 1597), Drayton, Jonson and Mundy (December 1597), Chapman (May 1598), Day (July 1598), Marston (1599), and Middleton and Webster (May 1602). Middleton's payments from Henslowe come mainly in 1602 and cease in 1604, and it seems likely that until 1601 he was still in Oxford.

Middleton must have married about this time, possibly in 1602 ; in 1624 his son, Edward, was twenty. His wife's name was probably Magdalen, and she was almost five years older than her husband.[2] Magdalen Marbeck—his wife's maiden name—had two relatives connected with the stage, her uncle Dr. Roger Marbeck, who did some academic acting at Oxford, and Thomas Marbeck, her brother, at one time an Admiral's man. Further, her father, Edward Marbeck, was a legal man, one of the Six Clerks in Chancery.[3] Middleton's marriage may well have established a connection that helped to bring him to the notice of Philip Henslowe.

Two entries in the Diary for May, 1602, commence the story of Middleton's dramatic car-

1. Edition consulted is that by R.A. Foakes and R.T. Rickert (Cambridge, 1961).
2. Eccles, "Middleton a Poett," pp.535-536.
3. Eccles, "Middleton's Birth and Education," pp. 440-441.

eer.[4] A play called Caesar's Fall is mentioned there, to which Middleton probably contributed little ; two other plays for Henslowe occupied him in 1602.[5] The important feature about his work for Henslowe is that he met at that time the seasoned playwright Thomas Dekker, who helped him in various ways until 1613. The earliest play which Middleton's name is connected with, Blurt Master Constable (1602), was entered on the Stationers' register on 7 June 1602 ; this play has in the last twenty years been increasingly connected with Dekker's name. The quarto of Blurt Master Constable was anonymous, and Middleton's claim rests on an attribution made in 1661 by Francis Kirkman. Dekker, however, was undoubtedly involved in the play to some degree, as the parallel passages advanced by Barker and Dodson seem to prove. (Although I must say that none of the parallel passages are very convincing. In particular Dodson compares Blurt to The Batchelars Banquet [1603], which is probably Robert Tofte's).

The plot has certain similarities with that of I Honest Whore (1604), mainly by Dekker; for instance, the courtesan Imperia resembles the honest whore Bellafront. II.ii. of Blurt Master Constable is clearly the prototype for II.i. of I Honest Whore ; both plays have an Hippolito in their dramatis personae. There are several further parallels, in plot and characterisation, which are not to the purpose here ; but what it amounts to is that all those scholars who have wished to give Blurt Master Constable to Dekker have forgotten that Dekker and Middleton produced a very similar play two years later, and that no-one has successfully determined the shares of the two men in that play.[6] Because I feel uncertain

4. I follow largely D.B. Dodson's "Blurt, Master Constable," NQ, CCIV (February, 1959), 61-65, for facts about the lost work for Henslowe. This article is marred (p.61) by Dodson's following M.G. Christian's "Middleton's Residence at Oxford," pp. 90-91, after Mark Eccles had pointed out a mistake in her guess at the date of Middleton's leaving Oxford ("Middleton a Poett," p.525).
5. See Barker, Thomas Middleton, p.195.
6. Middleton-Dekker collaborations over the years 1602-1604 include about five pieces, if we count The Family of Love (the argument for Dekker's presence in this play will be mentioned later.)

about the authorship of Blurt Master Constable, I am including a survey of its sources.....

The play bears marks of dual authorship ; scenes ii and iii of act five are seemingly the work of different men, especially since Fontinelle, a man of some nobility of spirit, denies all that had passed in the scene preceding. Up to act five Fontinelle is a Romeo-figure, in love with a woman who, being his enemy by reason of her different allegiance, cannot meet him except surreptitiously. The one meeting she does have with him is in III.ii., the night of the secret wedding. Then, after this, he has to be pleaded for by Violetta at Imperia's hands, when he has just eulogised the sweetness of love's variety to the courtesan. Likewise, III.i. is premature, since incidents timed for midnight precede incidents which occur specifically at ten o'clock in IV.i. The Fontinelle-Violetta-Camillo triangle seems to be a dramatic conception joined with some violence to the bawdy intrigue of Blurt-Lazarillo-Imperia. These facts perhaps point to dual authorship ; if Middleton was a participant in the play, I take it he wrote the main action concerning Fontinelle and Violetta. Nearly all the parallels which Dodson cites in his article use passages from the comic subplot. The precious quality of the verse in the main plot, for example

> Love bred on earth, is often nurs'd in hell ;
> By rote it reads woe, ere it learn to spell.
> (III.i.43-44)

which has in the past given difficulty to scholars more familiar with the Middleton of the later comedies, can be paralleled by the style of The Ghost of Lucrece, another pastiche of the early work of Shakespeare.

For the main plot is derived from Romeo and Juliet (1597) and not, as M.A. Scott[7] claims, from Boccaccio's Decamerone, sixth novel of the second day. As it happens, there was no English translation available till 1620 ; although Middleton

7. Elizabethan Translations from the Italian (Boston and New York, 1916), p.94.

did certainly read Italian at a later period. The tale Miss Scott seems to mean concerns the family of Henriet Capece ; I take it the parallel she believes to exist comes closest at the point when Geoffrey Capece is gaoled because he has fallen in love with Spina, the widowed daughter of Messer Conrado Malespina. But this parallel is specious ; the attendant circumstances and the rest of the story have not the remotest connection with Blurt Master Constable. In fact, Fontinelle's imprisonment is best considered as a variation on Romeo's banishment.

The parallels to Romeo and Juliet consist in management of the plot and verbal borrowings. The scene is laid in Italy, and Violetta and the young nobles belong to an important house which has a number of close friends and dependents. There is an accredited suitor Camillo, the equivalent of Shakespeare's Paris, and a fiery kinsman Hippolito, Tybalt's counterpart. At a dance (I.ii.), Violetta notices the handsome enemy, Fontinelle, who, like Romeo, refuses to take part because of his melancholy. Camillo and Fontinelle offer to plunge into a duel (II.i.), and have to be prevented by Hippolito ; as a result Fontinelle is imprisoned in a way, and with results, not unlike Romeo's banishment, since he and Violetta are married quickly and secretly at a monastery at midnight. Although the friar is unnamed, the monastery takes the name of Shakespeare's friar—Saint Lorenzo's. Before the couple can consummate their marriage, however, the swords are out and a hunt is started for Fontinelle (V.i.), in revenge for his supposed dishonour of Violetta. A comic dénouement to this tragic material is achieved by means of a duke who intervenes in the nick of time, and of a comic constable who disarms Fontinelle.

The romantic story of the star-crossed lovers is virtually over after act three ; it is up to this point that the main plot follows Romeo and Juliet most closely. Here the main verbal parallels between the two plays occur, rendered more plausible because of parallels in speakers, settings and situation:

> Camillo. And of beauty what tongue would not
> . . . speak the best, since it is the

jewel that hangs upon the brow of
heaven, the best colour that can be
laid upon the cheek of earth....
(I.i.100-103).

Compare :

Romeo. It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
.... Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear ;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
(I.v.48-50)[8]

At the dance which takes place as the young people meet and mingle on the young men's home-coming from the French wars, Fontinelle, a captive, is permitted to be present. Dispirited because he has forfeited honour in the wars, and because he thinks that his captor (Violetta, Camillo having given him to her as a tribute) is a "heavenly hell," a beautiful tormentor, he declines to dance at the offer of one of the young ladies, Hero[9] :

Lady, bid him whose heart no sorrow feels
Tickle the rushes with his wanton heels.
(I.i.195-196)

Likewise Romeo, dispirited at his vain suit to Rosaline, on being encouraged by Benvolio to go and dance at the Capulets', prefers to stand aside :

A torch for me : let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels.
(I.iv.35-36)

Violetta, however, differs a great deal from Juliet. The managing of the short pre-marriage scenes (III.ii. of Blurt Master Constable and II.i. of Romeo and Juliet) is very similar, with the great

8. Middleton had already used the image of kings hanging "jewels at the ear" (of verse) in Father Hubburd's Tales (VIII, 104).
9. A possible clue that Blurt, the comic constable, was copied from Dogberry of Much Ado About Nothing.

exception that there is not a single lyrical or romantic moment in the Blurt one. (If this were Dekker's work, one would expect him not to miss the opportunity to give Fontinelle a speech of sentimental admiration before Violetta arrives.) Middleton never wrote a purely romantic scene between lovers in all of his work. His ability to express deep affection was distinctly limited, becuase he tended to associate physical love with the contravention of chastity. On the one occasion he did write a set speech in praise of Matrimony (The Phoenix, II.ii.164-192), it is ironically spoken as an egregious abuse of the marital bond is taking place.

The type of theatrical performance for which Blurt Master Constable was written also militated against making the romantic interest serious or tragic. For Blurt was a Paul's play, i.e., a play tailored to suit performance by the boys from the choir and schoolhouse at St. Paul's cathedral.[10] The theatre in the singing-school at St. Paul's was newly re-opened in 1599 or 1600[11] and it provided plays full of sophisticated wit and irreverent burlesque of bourgeois taste and culture. The diminutive actors themselves—"actor[s] in less than decimo sexto," Middleton calls them (VIII,64)—were skilful at mimicking adult parts, and would be additionally humorous because of the incongruity of their size in the roles they attempted. Marston's Histriomastix (1599) contains burlesque of the tradition of heroic adventure, for instance; the high, unbroken voices of the boys probably gave the entire play an air of parody. In addition to the boys' youth (the eldest could not have been above fourteen), the private theatre had a smaller stage and acoustics better suited to their clear voices. Instead of the long rhetorical set speech, the conditions favoured puns and repartee. Caputi[12] asserts that the distinctive

10. See A. Caputi, John Marston, Satirist (Cornell, 1961), pp.97-112.
11. H.N. Hillebrand, The Child Actors, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. XI, No. 1 (February, 1926), chapter VIII, 207-219.
12. John Marston, Satirist, p. 100.

characteristics of the child theatre on its revival were "instrumental music, song, dance, and satire," and that however good the children may have been at imitating women they could not satisfactorily carry off masculine passions or gestures. Blurt Master Constable is an awkward attempt to transfer a romantic tale of pathos to a theatre which expected comedy and burlesque.

Obvious effects of the private theatre on Blurt are the number of indoor night-scenes (four) and chamber-scenes (two), perhaps because the Paul's stage easily suggested a small domestic area, not so light as the public theatre stage ; the number of songs (six) and dances ; and the comic burlesque of pedants and constables. Edward Pearce, who took over the Mastership of the Paul's boys at their revival,[13] set the Blurt songs to music, and one of these survives complete with music today.[14]

Although the subplot of the play may well be Dekker's work, a brief glance at its borrowings may be taken here. It owes something to the Spanish tale of Lazarillo de Tormes, first printed in 1553 in Spain. Translations into English were made by David Rowland of Anglesey in 1586, The pleasaunt and delectable historie of Lazarillo de Tormes, and W.P. in 1596, The second parte of the history. The part of the tale where Lazarillo passes into the service of various poverty-stricken and roguish employers is being drawn on in Blurt Master Constable. Pilcher, Lazarillo's servant in the Elizabethan play, resembles the Spanish Lazarillo more closely than does Lazarillo himself. Lazarillo owes quite as much to the tradition of the braggart soldier, however. Francesco Andreini,[15] chief of the Gelosi company, which possibly visited England in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, was famous for his braggart soldier. This character, derived from the Miles Gloriosus of Plautine comedy, had already been transformed in Italian comedy into a Spanish soldier of fortune,[16] a

13. E.K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), II, 19.
14. In British Museum MS. Additional 17786-17791 f13b.
15. Love's Labour's Lost, ed. R. David (London, 1951), p. xxxvi.
16. Cf. Li Dui Simili di Plauto (MS. 1618, ? played before 1600), in which the Captain is Spanish and Hortentia a courtesan of Fano.

figure familiar in an Italy garrisoned by Spanish armies. Lazarillo of Blurt has the same fantastic manner of speaking as Love's Labour's Lost's swaggerers have ; here is Moth on Armado :

> With your hat penthouse-like o'er the shop of your eyes.
>
> (III.i.16-17).

Lazarillo similarly addresses Blurt :

> Most great Blurt, I do unpenthouse the roof of my carcass.
>
> (I.ii.82-83)

The affected "ch" for "c" as in "chitty" (III.iii. 43) again echoes Love's Labour's Lost, when Holofernes demands to know why Armado says "Chirrah" and not "Sirrah" (V.i.32-33).

The master-constable, honest and ponderously logical, was well on the way to becoming a stock figure in his own right. Endimion (1591), a Paul's play, has one. Blurt and Slubber bring to mind Dogberry and Verges ; there is a slight verbal parallel of Much Ado, III.ii.71-72, at I.ii.71-72. Dogberry's watch bring the dangerous Don John plot to a cheerful conclusion, just as Blurt and his watch prevent Hippolito's hot-blooded young men from setting upon Fontinelle. Blurt is also a portrait of a constable drawn from life, as a perusal of William Lambard's The Dueties of Constables (1599)[17] reveals.

The episode in which Curvetto, the lecherous courtier, attempts to climb up a rope-ladder to Imperia (IV.ii.1-67) is perhaps a ludicrous echo of Romeo's wooing of Juliet ; and the episode in which Lazarillo falls into a cess-pit when he lies down to sleep, and is afterwards drenched with urine (IV.ii. and IV.iii.68-103) is borrowed from Boccaccio's tale of Andreuccio of Perugia (second day, fifth tale). Andreuccio is feignedly welcomed to the house of a Sicilian courtesan, and his clothes robbed after he has fallen into

17. P. 112, and p. 30 of the last section of the book, are relevant to the play.

a cess-pit. Similarly, the undressed Lazarillo falls through a trapdoor. Robert Greene's Black Book's Messenger (1592), in an anecdote about how Ned Brown's wife was cross-bitten in her own art, seems to have provided the incident in which Curvetto hauls down a chamber-pot on his head (IV.i.1-32).

Blurt Master Constable is thus something of a patchwork, mainly a patchwork of early Shakespearean drama. There is an attempt to do poetic justice at the end, but even that is mock poetic justice ; Imperia refuses to marry Curvetto, and he her. It seems impossible to detect any of the typical themes of Middleton at all in the play. Hillebrand goes so far as to contend that "no play of real depth of feeling and of artistic purpose, two exceptions always made [Epicoene and The Knight of the Burning Pestle], was brought upon the boards of [the children's] theatres."[18] The medium, I agree, did tend to create artificial plays, which were imitative of plays on the public stages ; yet Middleton managed to impress his individual point of view on some of the comedies which follow the shallow intrigue of Blurt Master Constable.

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SOURCES

Main plot : William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet (1597).

Subplot : Incidents from William Shakespeare, Much Ado about Nothing (1600) ; Giovanni Boccaccio, Il Decamerone (1471), II.5. ; Robert Greene, The Black Book's Messenger (1592).

Middleton's probable next play, The Family of Love, is something of a topical satire, although by no means so thoroughgoing as A Game at Chesse. According to Professor W. Power, [19]

. . . . . .

18. The Child Actors, p.272.
19. "Thomas Middleton vs. King James I," NQ, CCII (December, 1957), 534.

it may have been written in 1603 between March and November, or in 1604 after February. He thinks that Middleton was probably busy with The Phoenix between November 1603, and February 1604. March 1603 marked the publication of King James' Basilikon Doron, which Power claims Middleton read and deferred to in The Phoenix and The Family of Love, in order to ingratiate himself with the new monarch. James made a cutting remark in his book about the Anabaptist sect named the Family of Love, calling them a "vile sect" and saying that by Puritans he principally meant this special sect.[20] He was simply being devious, as Power shows, and using the Family as a makeshift cover for remarks about Presbyterians that Puritans might take umbrage at. The reason he seized on the Family as safe to attack is that Elizabeth had issued proclamations against them, one in 1580, others before that date, because they counted it lawful to deny anything that was advantageous to them.[21] The Familists came back at James shortly after July 1604,[22] in a petition which begins by denying the truth of the remark in Basilikon Doron. Fuller repeats the charge of licentiousness ("The Family of Love [or Lust rather]") twice, which Nashe had made in 1592 : "we diuide Christs garment into ... shipmans hose like the Anabaptists and adulterous Familists" (Pierce Penilesse His Svpplication To The Divell, pp.27-28). The petition was designed to "separate themselves from the Puritans (as persons odious to King JAMES) that they might not fare the worse for their Vicinity unto them" (X, 33). Fuller says that he could not find out what came of the petition, but thought it may have been slighted ; hence they became fair game for ridicule. The sect had been inconsiderable for a long time, so that

20. "Middleton vs. James," pp.528-529.
21. Bertil Johansson, Religion and Superstition in the Plays of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton, University of Upsala Essays and Studies on English Language and Literature, VII, 157.
22. The petition is printed in Thomas Fuller's Church History of Britain (1655), X, 29-33.

Middleton's play must date from the period 1603-1604 if it was to have had any bite at all. The original stir caused by the Familists took place in the 1570's, when Christopher Vitell translated a number of books (1574-75) by Hendrik Niclaes, an early Familist leader in Holland. John Rogers went into the attack in 1578, with The displaying of an horrible secte of heretiques, naming themselues the Familie of Loue (reprinted 1579), and then Vitell must have answered him, for in 1579 he wrote An Answere vnto a wicked Libel made by Christopher Vitel, one of the chiefe English Elders of the pretended Family of Loue. I shall have more to say about Middleton's use of The displaying of an horrible secte later.

The first quarto did not appear until 1607, but in the address "To the Reader," Middleton states that "the newness of it made it much more desired than at this time." Baldwin Maxwell[23] offers 1605 as the date of composition, as there is a reference to a "whole new livery of porters" at I.iii.109, which he believes refers to the revival of the Company of Porters in 1605. Perhaps these references (there is another at IV.iii.45-46) were added for later performances. It is probable that at least two companies owned the play, Paul's boys and the children of the King's Revels. R.H. Barker[24] holds to an early date, 1602, and accepts a 1605 revision. If we remember that the theatres were closed owing to the plague between March 1603 and April 1604, a composition date of 1603 and a performance on the opening of the theatres seems plausible. A satire of this type might just keep its savour for twelve months. At any rate, it is a piece of satirical opportunism, taking advantage of a small sect by deliberately using

23. "A Note on the Date of Middleton's The Family of Love with a query on the Porters Hall Theatre," Elizabethan Studies and Other Essays in Honor of George F. Reynolds (University of Colorado Studies, 1945), pp. 195-200.
24. Thomas Middleton, p.159.

it, and its reputation for licentiousness, as a stalking-horse to satirise the Puritans, even though the sect itself insisted that it was not Puritan. For instance, Dryfat, a sceptical merchant, who constantly pokes fun at the sect, calls their women "a crew of narrow-ruffed, strait-laced ... dames" (V.iii.192),[25] but goes on to allude to one of their licentious practises in the following terms :

> each man's copyhold will become freehold, ... ; their wives, the only ornaments of their houses, and of all their wares, goods, and chattels, the chief moveables, will be made common.
>
> (V.iii.196-201)

John Rogers in 1579 had given evidence of practises which doubtless gave rise to the charges of lechery :

> if he will be content that all his goodes shalbe in common amongst the rest of all his brethren, he shalbe receiued ; whereunto he answering, yea ... All the company both men and women kisse him, one after another.
>
> (The displaying of an horrible secte (1579), Iv)

William Power's thesis in the article on "Middleton vs. James I" tries to show that for a long time Middleton endeavoured to secure James' favourable notice ; he doubtless thought that satirising the Puritans, however crudely, would consitute a first move in this direction.

The play's anti-Familist satire divides off sharply from the main plot which concerns the middle-class Romeo and Juliet, Gerardine and Maria : it occupies I.iii., II.i., III.iii., IV.i. and iv., and part of V.ii., a courtroom scene. There is another line of action telling the story of Lipsalve and Gudgeon, who attempt to seduce the three women of the play, with

25. No doubt the boy who acted Mistress Purge was dressed like a Puritan.

no success, and are finally chastened for their efforts. G.J. Eberle[26] argues that Dekker is responsible for some of the play, since the precious verse given to the lovers sorts so ill with the prose satire. He would in effect give this verse to Dekker, and leave Middleton with the Lipsalve and Gudgeon story and the Familist satire. But his division is hopelessly vacillating ; almost every time he has decided to allot a scene to one man, he find traces of the other. He omits to mention three very important considerations—that Middleton did write in this rather stilted gorgeous manner in his early work, that he was under Dekker's influence at this time, and that the play is imitating Shakespeare everywhere.[27] To give an example of the dangers of this last omission : in II.ii. Eberle finds "jocund" a word typical of Dekker, who has "dozens" of uses. Yet Miss Olive shows the passage where it occurs to be imitated from Romeo and Julict, II.v.9-10. I cannot therefore place much trust on Eberle's finding of Dekker in The Family of Love ; his whole demonstration may be cogently refuted at any time soon.

Critics have noted that the romantic plot and the satire do not mingle well, and have thought that Middleton's possible revision (for the children of the King's Revels?) accounted for the extraordinary way in which Lipsalve and Gudgeon make lewd comments during the stiff balcony scene when Maria appears to lament her hard fate (I.ii.70ff.). Hugo Jung[28] early noted the awkward effect thus created : "Der Effekt ist ein unangenehmer, weil es dem Dichter nicht gelungen ist, die beiden Welten entweder einander näher zu rücken oder in einen erquicklich wirkenden Gegensatz zueinander zu bringen."

Middleton returned to Romeo and Juliet again for material. There must have been a vogue for the "separated lovers" theme on the

26. "Dekker's Part in The Familie of Love," Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies, ed. J.G. McManaway, G.E. Dawson and E.E. Willoughby (Washington, D.C., 1948), pp.723-738.
27. See W.J. Olive, "Imitation of Shakespeare in Middleton's The Family of Love," PQ, XXIX (1950), 75-78.
28. Das Verhaltnis Thomas Middleton's zu Shakspere, Munchener Beiträge zur romanischen und englischen Philologie, XXIX (Leipzig, 1904), 41.

boys' stage ; Jack Drum's Entertainment has at least four balcony scenes of a burlesque type and Marston[29] was a specialist in "lovers-in-distress" themes of a burlesque nature. However, the prevailing tone of The Family of Love is distinctly less romantic than that of Blurt Master Constable. The blurred effect of the story of the two lovers, who win their ends by the desperate expedient of having a child, seems to result from following the sympathetic treatment of Romeo and Juliet and trying to burlesque and exaggeratc the romantic tradition at the same time. Hugo Jung and Miss Olive point out that I.ii., the first balcony scene, contains most verbal echoes of Romeo and Juliet, III.ii. In the following passage, Middleton imitates as much as he can without actually copying :

> The black-brow'd Night, drawn in her pitchy wain,
> In starry-spangled pride rides now o'er heaven :
> Now is the time when stealing minutes tell
> The stole delight joy'd by all faithful lovers :
> Now loving souls contrive both place and means
> For wished pastimes....
> (I.ii.90-95)

Compare Juliet awaiting Romeo :

> such a waggoner
> As Phaethon would whip you to the west,
> And bring in cloudy night immediately.
> Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
> That runaway's eyes may wink, and Romeo
> Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen....
> (III.ii.4-7).[30]

Maria is actually being overheard at this point by her lover just as Juliet was at II.ii. by Romeo. Likewise, she hears someone call and has to promise to send further to her lover. Two bawdy companions accompany Gerardine part of the time just as the jesting Mercutio and Ben-

29. Caputi, John Marston, Satirist, pp.117-156.
30. Quotation from Edward Dowden's Arden edition (London, 1900).

volio accompany Romeo. Finally, both Romeo and Gerardine are banished from the house of their beloved, Gerardine merely pretending to depart for a distant country. The parallels stop at IV.ii. in preparation for a happy ending, after which Gerardine's capable plotting secures a child and a wedding for Maria with a cash dowry into the bargain. Gerardine is something of a transitional figure between the romantic young lover of Shakespeare and the witty young rogue of Middleton's own comedy.

Middleton seems to have been thoroughly familiar with Romeo and Juliet. Certain images reappear completely transformed ; on Gerardine's taking leave of Maria in I.ii., Lipsalve makes the cynical comment

> women have sharp falcon's eyes, and can soar aloft ; but keep them, like falcons, from flesh, and they soon stoop to a gaudy lure.
> (I.ii.149-152)

Juliet had used the same terms to describe her desire to attract Romeo back again in the leave-taking scene : "O for a falconer's voice/ To lure this tassel-gentle back again!" (II.ii. 158-159). Lipsalve's cynicism is not intended to be endorsed in the play ; gaudy lures are put before Maria by her uncle and Lipsalve, who impersonates Gerardine, and she does not stoop to them—but then Gerardine sees to it she is not kept from flesh. The marital contract is regulated by financial consideration, and yet we are still intended to accept Gerardine's exalted protestations, about Maria and about love, at face value.

The way Middleton furnished the lovers with exalted speeches was to ransack Ovid's Metamorphoses for classical personae, and to apply them to a given rhetorical topic : here, for instance, is Gerardine on the "sacred deity, Love" :

> And Jove, whose frown all mortal lives bereaves,
> His marble throne and ivory sceptre leaves,
> And in the likeness of a bull was seen,
> As forc'd by him to bear the Tyrian queen
> Through Neptune's watery kingdom : if these submit,
> My metamopphose is not held unfit.
> (IV.ii.14-19)

Of course, the comparison is inept ; Jupiter is the arch-dissimulator in love affairs of the Metamorphoses, whereas Gerardine intends to emphasise his readiness to go through anything for Maria's sake. The general inspiration seems to be Marlovian ; but Middleton was not sufficiently imbued with classical learning to think constantly in terms of mythological events.

The story of Lipsalve, Gudgeon and Dr. Glister perhaps owes something to a tale in Tarltons newes out of Purgatorie (1590),[31] entitled "The tale of the two louers of Pisa, and why they were whipt in Purgatorie with nettles!"[32] It is the last tale in the collection. Mutio, an old doctor, has a wife called Margaret, of whom he is very jealous. Lionello, a handsome young man, falls in love with her and she with him. The man he consults about the best way of winning his mistress is, ironically, the old doctor, since he hopes that "with his drogges he might helpe him forward in his purposes." After the first meeting Lionello reports back to the old man, who resolves to revenge himself on the would-be cuckolder. At the meeting of Margaret and Lionello next day Lionello only escapes by hiding in a "great drie fat full of feathers." Lionello again reports back to Mutio describing what happened and tells him of the next venue. Lionello escapes Mutio's wrath this time by being hidden in a trunk and removed from the house before Mutio sets fire to it; Margaret had persuaded her husband that the trunk was valuable to him. When the whole affair is later revealed by Lionello, which he pretends was a trick to drive Mutio from his jealousy, the laughter and derision are the death of the old man. He whips them in Purgatory with nettles for their adultery.

Middleton has used the device of the would-be lover reporting back to the man whose mis-

31. Reprinted by G. Bullough in Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, II, 26-34.
32. An adaptation of the tale of Bucciolo and Pietro Paulo in Il Pecorone, I.2, by Giovanni Fiorentino. See Scott, Elizabethan Translations from the Italian, p.57.

tress he is unwittingly courting. Lipsalve and Gudgeon do not know Mrs. Purge is Dr. Glister's mistress. Gudgeon, for instance, asks Glister to help him "either by medecine or your art magical" to work Mrs. Purge to his will (II.iv.158-159). In V.i. the doctor has to keep the pair from his wife. Middleton does not let the gallants succeed with either lady, but has them whipped for lechery. Gerardine's trick of being carried into (II.iv.) and out (III.vii.) of Maria's apartment in a trunk of valuables is perhaps also taken from Tarltons newes.

The idea of the whipping for lechery in Purgatory seems to have left its mark on III.vi. Glister says that he can "see my brave spirits ... nakedly burning in the hell-fire of lechery" (11.3-4) ; like two nether-world spirits, Lipsalve and Gudgeon appear in white shirts, almost naked. It is odd that Middleton should have made Glister, the habitual adulterer of Mrs. Purge, the scourge to punish the two lechers.[33]

33. Middleton used succubi, witches, ghosts and other weird creatures throughout his dramatic career. These creatures often embody his most extreme fantasies, and are connected with sexual offences. It seems likely from a reference in III.vii. of The Family of Love to the Pythoness as a magician that Middleton had digested Ludwig Lavater's Of Ghostes and Spirites walking by nyght (1572), which discusses at length the spirit-raising ability of the Witch of Endor. The English version (trans R.H.) merely says "That the true Samuell did not appeare to the vvytche in Endor," but the corresponding Latin text of 1575 has "Verum Samuelem Pythonissae in Endor non apparuisse."

From a reading of Lavater, Middleton would have learnt what forms spirits might assume : chapter XIX of Part I claims that "they shew themselues in sundry sorte : sometymes in the shape of a man whome we know, who is yet alyue ..." (Quoted from Of Ghostes and spirites walking by nyght, ed. J. Dover Wilson and May Yardley [Oxford, 1929], p.91.) We hear of a certain Chunegunda (pp.91-92) who, though innocent of adultery, was visited by the spirit of a young courtier.

Glister jealously keeps the play's women as much as he can to himself ; he is a successful version of Mutio, since his foreknowledge of the gallants' schemes helps him to prevent them. Perhaps he is a personal satire on some London doctor—the allusions to his red hair and beard (V.i.13,15) are certainly particularized.

Mrs. Purge is the play's Puritan ; Middleton bases his satire on John Roger/s The displaying of an horrible secte (1578, 1579). Rogers[34] attacked them fiercely for their secretive ways and abuse of scripture. David George,[35] a Dutchman, was the original founder, but at his death in 1556 his differences had not caused him to move outside the parent body, the Anabaptists of Delft. His chief disciple was Hendrik Niclaes, known in England as Henry Nicholas, an Anabaptist mystic who came over to England in Edward VI's reign.[36] He claimed great intimacy with God and equality with Moses, Christ, the Apostles and other scriptural saints. Even so, early sinister misdoings came to colour the integrity of the Family,[37] since one of the three women in Nicholas' household (whom he claimed were his wife, sister and cousin) was reported to have confessed on her sick-bed that he had abused her and told her not to worry about hell-fire since she would not die. Nicholas' English disciple was Christopher Vitel (fl. 1555-1579), a Southwark joiner who translated his books ; this Familist leader is the object of Rogers' polemics. Vitel taught Nicholas'

34. Rogers' was not the only attack ; John Knewstub answered them in A Confutation of monstrous and horrible heresies ... (1579) ; his book is concerned more with theology than is Rogers'. Francis Russell was in the Council meeting which investigated the Family ; he acquired Knewstub's book (see M. St. Clare Byrne and Gladys Scott Thomson, "My Lord's Books," RES, VII [1931], 395).
35. Jöchers Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexikon (Hildesheim, 1961), II, 48-49, has information about him under "David Joris."
36. See Jonson's The Alchemist, V.v.117, and Herford and Simpson's note to the line (X,115). D.N.B. puts the date of Nicholas' arrival as 1562 or 63.
37. The aspersions on Nicholas' character are unfounded (D.N.B.).

doctrine and pursued a policy of eschewing conflicts over doctrine with other sects. Henry Nicholas had taught, according to two Familists examined by Sir William Moore,[38] that once a Familist is deified or "Godded with God," "what so euer they commit it cannot be sinne ... bee it neuer so vngodly" (HiiiV). Rogers is quick to reduce this argument to absurdity :

> And what acte so euer they do, it can not be sinne, no more then the Prophete Osees, which was commaunded to take a Harlot to his wife, and to beget children in fornication, and he did so. Vppon such false and vaine persuasions, what vile doctrine doeth followe, the verie simple may perceiue.
>
> (HiiiV)

Middleton perceived Rogers' mark ; this equivocation about real innocence and the innocence of the "godded," however true or untrue, was grist to his satiric mill. In the mock court scene, V.iii., Gerardine disguised as a 'paritor puts a charge to Mrs. Purge :

> Speak, Rebecca Purge, art thou one of this Family? hast thou ever known the body of any man there or elsewhere concupiscentally?

Mrs. Purge, mindful of the licence to "answere to euerie demaundant (not beeing one of their sect) in suche sorte as they thinke best shall please him ... alledging, that he is no neighbour, and that therefore they may abuse him at their pleasure," replies "No, master doctor" on the ground that

> I thank my spirit I have fear before my eyes, which my husband sees not, because something hangs in's light.
>
> (V.iii.208-215)

Some critics have said that Middleton was no

38. All Rogers' evidence is called in question by E.R., IviVff. of the 1579 edition of The displaying of an horrible secte.

moralist, and would no doubt cite Mrs. Purge's adultery, lying and final escape from punishment as an example of the point. But this is satire ; surely it is more effective, in demonstrating vice upheld by a delusion of faith, to portray it as dangerous and successful. Middleton's attack is clumsy, but it does not go beyond the information Rogers gives. Middleton makes the Family meet at night and give passwords (IV.i.), both details found in Rogers :

> They are called together ever in the night time ... and when they come to the house of meeting, they knocke at the doore, saying : here is a Brother in Christ, or a Sister in Christe.
>
> (Iv - Iv^{v})

Purge, in his pursuit of his wife, gets it wrong and says "A Familiar Brother" instead of "A Brother in the Family" (IV.i.121-122). A sect with a secret doctrine, who say and publish nothing about belief, claim that the marriage of such who are not enlightened with true faith is polluted and filthy, and receive kissing as a token of admission, are somewhat open to satire. The humour of Purge cuckolding himself, and then of Mrs. Purge excusing herself, like Falstaff, on the ground that she knew her husband "by instinct," is droll indeed. Purge is, in any case, a ridiculous cuckold, one of those termed "cuckold by Act of Parliament" in The Cobler of Canterburie (1590), C3^{v}.

Other analogues have been cited for incidents in the play. R.C. Bald[39] directs attention to two early Italian comedies, Ariosto's Il Negromante[40] (1520) and Cecchi's Lo Spirito (1549) ; R.W. Bond,[40] who summarises the plots of these plays, comments that the motive of the chest as a means of entering a mistress' chamber is not new :

39. "The Sources of Middleton's City Comedies," JEGP, XXXIII (1934), 385.
40. Early Plays from the Italian, ed, and with an introduction by, R. Warwick Bond (Oxford, 1911).

it had been used in La Calandria and by the novelists, being original perhaps in Boccaccio's ninth tale, second day. This is not to the purpose here, as Ambrogiuolo is a spy, not a lover. In Il Negromante Camillo is smuggled into Emilia's chamber ; in Lo Spirito Aldobrandino is put into a chest to convey him into the house of Doctor Antonio, whose daughter he loves. La Innocentia Rivenduta[41] (? before 1600) is a dramatic (scenario) treatment of the Ambrogiuolo story. The coffer in that version contains a man's worldly possessions which are to be stored.

Obviously the play is the product of immaturity, though Samuel Schoenbaum[42] goes too far when he calls it "tedious calumny of an insignificant Puritan sect." It shows a split down Middleton's literary personality which he never reconciled ; there is the attempt to portray a pair of lovers in spiritual communion, and to set them off by portraying a hypocritical middle-class world of sinners, salvationists, doctors and tradesmen ; but his interest in the manners and morals of the latter group betrays him into making the lovers participate in the drive for security and cash. Middleton experiences a clash between flesh and spirit and finds it impossible to trust the purity of anything fleshly. Shakespeare, his quarry for material, can survey sexual passion with a calm that Middleton cannot. His yearning after finer things—romantic verse, aristocratic patronage—had caused Middleton to shake off his middle-class allegiance, yet it was the class with which he was one in spirit. After a little more effort to move away from the London world and frail humanity, he gave in and wrote, in an ironic manner, of the successful world which had bred him. With the Puritans, he was less restrained, and began to loose satirical shafts ;

41. In K.M. Lea, Italian Popular Comedy (Oxford, 1934), II , 573.
42. "A Chaste Maid in Cheapside and Middleton's City Comedy," in Studies in the English Renaissance drama, ed. Josephine W. Bennett, Oscar Cargill and Vernon Hall Jr. (New York, 1959), p.287.

at first inaccurate, as in The Family of Love, but after several tries, mercilessly on target.

Gerardine is the first example of the witty intriguer in full control of things ; his drive to accomplish his desires is seen by Miss J.R. Sargent[43] as "a symbol of an unsettled, rising society with all the energy which will bring it to success in the future, on which its eyes are firmly fixed." She sees Gerardine as totally unselfish, and his appearance from the trunk as a kind of resurrection, following his forfeiture of identity.[44] Maria's power to raise him up from the trunk, therefore, adds dignity to the workings of young idealistic love, as juxtaposed with lechery and adultery. This very modern treatment of the play is qualified by a statement that its unity, evident in conception, was not achieved in execution.

Probably two companies performed the play, as I have mentioned. The title-page says that the children of the King's Revels acted it, presumably at Whitefriars ; this company did not begin playing till 1607. H.N. Hillebrand[45] thinks that the Paul's boys acted it and that only later did it pass on to a weaker company—presumably because its original interest lay in its topicality. So we have no need to assume Middleton ever did more than revise a play for a fourth-rate company like this one.

SOURCES

Main plot : William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet (1597).

Subplot : John Rogers, The displaying of an horrible secte of heretiques (1578) ; Tarltons newes out of Purgatorie (1590).

43. The Moral and Social Bases of Middleton's Comedy, unpublished University of London dissertation (1954), p.88.
44. Moral and Social Bases, p. 104.
45. The Child Actors, p. 299. He dates the play mid-1605.

The image of the Phoenix was often applied to the new monarch, James VI of Scotland, when he succeeded to the English throne. Middleton and Dekker's The Magnificent Entertainment, presented before James in London on 15 March 1603/4, addresses the new king as a "sacred Phoenix."[46] There can be little doubt that the character of Prince Phoenix was intended to glance in a complimentary way at James ; the play must date from a period close to the beginning of the reign, before Middleton's hostile attitude towards the Scots came out clearly within a play or two. Middleton may still have been trying to go along with the precepts which James enunciated in Basilikon Doron,[47] although his knowledge of James' book amounts, in Bawcutt's phrase, only to "a faint influence." Miss Williamson's attempt to draw a parallel proves the exactness of Bawcutt's phrase.

E.K. Chambers[48] claims that the performance before the King mentioned on the title-page of the 1607 quarto must have taken place on 20 February 1604. Professor W. Power[49] allows that the play may well have been written after The Family of Love, but played whilst the theatres were still closed because of the plague. Baldwin Maxwell[50] gives evidence that 1603 must be almost certainly the right year for the play's composition.

As one might have predicted, the suggestion that Dekker might have had a share in the play came up, in 1954, in a dissertation by D.B. Dodson.[51] He suggests Dekker's hand in the main plot characterisation of the Duke, Phoenix and Fidelio, on the ground that we are here dealing with political allegory which employs Dekkerian

46. N.W. Bawcutt, "Middleton's 'The Phoenix' as a Royal Play," NQ, CCI (July, 1956), 287.
47. So Marilyn L. Williamson, "The Phoenix : Middleton's Comedy de Regimine Principum," R.N., X (1957), 185.
48. The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), III, 439.
49. "Middleton vs. James I," p534.
50. "Middleton's The Phoenix," J.Q. Adams Memorial Studies, p.748.
51. Thomas Middleton's City Comedies, unpublished University of Columbia dissertation (1954), pp.74-98.

symbols. Hence the good characters go to Dekker, and the rogues and villains to Middleton. Thus Dodson is able to transform Middleton into a London-centred realist from the first, for Blurt Master Constable and the idealistic parts of The Family of Love had already gone to Dekker—ascriptions which suit Dodson's restricted view of Middleton very well. This theory, however, has not been taken seriously.

The story of the virtuous prince who pretends to go on his travels to see the world, but in reality stays at home in disguise to survey the true nature of his own realm, is treated by more than one Jacobean dramatist. Shakespeare's Measure for Measure is a good example, but it was not performed at Court till 26 December 1604. The motif seems, for the Jacobeans, to have been original in Italy, and one scenario, Il giusto principe[52] (published 1622, played earlier), comes as close as any Italian version of the motif I know to Middleton's play. The actual substance of the sentiments spoken by the Duke, the Prince and Proditor have occupied commentators much more than the play's Italian element, which is specified as Ferrarese. Basilikon Doron (1603) has loomed large ; I have already quoted Bawcutt's remark about its "faint influence." William Power[53] was not put off the scent so easily, and he recommends a thoroughgoing reading of Jacobean history into the main plot events. The old Duke stands for Queen Elizabeth ("in a very limited sense," Bawcutt had said), the Prince for James, and Proditor for Sir Walter Ralegh. Remarks typical of Power's attempt to fit the play with any degree of closeness to historical facts include "It is unlikely that Ralegh had any notion of making himself King." Since so much effort has been spent on proving that Middleton was using Basilikon Doron in The Phoenix, I may as well avoid the necessity of quoting a number of non-parallel passages by citing Power's remark, who is more enthusiastic about the possible relationship than I am : "If The Phoenix nowhere

52. See Winifred Smith, "Two Commedie dell'Arte on the Measure for Measure Story," R.R., XIII (1922), 264-270.
53. "'The Phoenix,' Raleigh and King James," NQ CCIII (February, 1958), 57-61.

quotes directly from Basilikon Doron, it echoes the spirit of that work."[54]

To return, then, to Italian scenari on the subject of travelling princes in disguise. Italian comedians had certainly been in London in 1602, but are only recorded as playing at Court. If Middleton did see them play there or elsewhere, he would have learnt about the type of set used for a scenario.[55] This set had six houses ranged in threes on opposite sides of a street, and doors permitting exit and entry. In The Phoenix there are six houses, all in Ferrara ; the episode at the end of IV.i. and beginning of IV.ii., where Phoenix leans on a doorbell and is hauled inside, seems to depend on having a house-front façade on stage. Phoenix's main function, however, is to enquire into the different kinds of injustice and iniquity in his father's realm—which manifest themselves as treason, legal racketeering and sharp practice, wife-selling and adultery. Usually in disguised-ruler plots the substitute turns out to be corruptible, as in Measure for Measure and Il giusto principe. But since the old Duke is Phoenix's father, that can hardly happen. In Il giusto principe, a prince leaves the realm to a deputy whilst he goes away to deal with a rebellion. Amongst the iniquities which make their appearance during the prince's absence are adultery (resulting in murder), abuse of power by authority (especially with reference to a young girl betrothed to another man), and the corruption of justice. At the end of the scenario the prince returns and metes out justice on the hypocritical deputy, who has condemned another man for a fault he himself is guilty of. I mention this scenario because it removes any need to assume that Middleton must have known Measure for Measure, and also to show how original a variation his treatment of the theme is.

54. Daniel B. Dodson, in"King James and 'The Phoenix' —Again," NQ, CCIII (October, 1958), 434-437, links the play to James' promises of clemency to the Catholics. The article accounts for perhaps four lines in the play.
55. For the visit and setting, see J.R.A. Nicoll, The World of Harlequin (Cambridge, 1963), p. 169, and the illustration on p. 14.

Gerard Langbaine[56] mystified succeeding scholars by offering as source for the play a Spanish novel called The Force of Love. R.U. Pane[57] has nothing to offer in the way of a translation with that title, and Baldwin Maxwell[58] found only a tale called La Fuerza del Amor, by Maria de Zayas y Sotomayor, written twenty-five years after The Phoenix had been printed, and bearing no relation to it. Another misleading comparison, which Swinburne made, was of Phoenix to Haroun Alraschid ; not until 1706-8 does this Eastern figure turn up in English.

The complications of plot which illustrate the iniquities of Ferrarese society have more definite sources than the main framework story. II.ii. is one scene for which we can say no written source was needed, since it seems to draw on biographical details. I came to the conclusion that the Thomas Harvey-Anne Middleton quarrels had a good deal to do with this scene before I found that John B. Brooks[59] had come to the same conclusion. In II.ii., the vile Captain sells his wife Castiza for five hundred crowns. The Captain is Castiza's second husband, but Fidelio, her son by her first marriage, disapproves :

> that marriage
> Knew nothing of my mind, it never flourish'd
> In any part of my affection.
> (I.i.159-161)

Wife-selling actually took place in Middleton's day. One wife was sold[60] for five guineas, evidently near Stowmarket. It seems as if Middleton

56. The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets (1699), p.99. The entry runs : "See the Story writ by Mignel (sic) de Cervantes, called, the Force of Love, being a Spanish Novel."
57. English Translations from the Spanish (1484-1943), (New Brunswick, 1944).
58. J.Q. Adams Memorial Studies, p.753.
59. "Middleton's Stepfather and the Captain of 'The Phoenix,'" NQ, CCVI (October, 1961), 382-384.
60. From Beatrice Saunders, The Age of Candlelight (London, 1959), p. 76. She offers no date for this transaction.

transformed the incident whereby Thomas Harvey, sea-captain, was accused of spending and selling "div[er]s Leases goodes and chattles w^ch he had in marryage ... And in thend being Determyned to travayle beyond ye Seas"[61] into a dramatic scene in which the wife herself was actually sold. Brooks points out that the threat of poisoning is made by the Captain, as in real life : "if all means fail, I'll kill or poison her, and purge my fault at sea" (I.ii. 148-149). It follows, too, that Fidelio is partially a representation of Middleton as the faithful son, who disliked the marriage at first ; later his mother, Castiza, apologizes for not heeding his sound opinion :

> My kind son !
> Whose liking I neglected in this match.
> (II.ii.302-303)

At the end of the scene, the Captain is packed off to sea without so much as a single crown.

The mature woman or widow figure is not often patronised in Middleton in this way, nor is the young man usually allowed so much control of the situation. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that Middleton was attempting to bring justice to events which were violent and sordid ; he had to vent his sense of outrage against Harvey by judging and condemning him at once, instead of waiting till the final court scene. The chaste and innocent portrait of the widow that The Phoenix gives us is an idealised version of Anne Middleton, a clear indication that she had convinced her son she was a victim of callous, predatory masculinity. Yet part of the fault lay in her desirability :

> Why didst thou marry me?
> You think, as most of your insatiate widows,
> That captains can do wonders....
> (I.ii.91-93)

demands the Captain. He is so afraid that she

61. Christian, Sidelight, p.492. The result of this, according to the plaintiffs, was that his wife was left destitute save for the house.

will cuckold him that he decides to arrange it by selling out his rights in her to Proditor.

IV.iii., the episode in which the Knight escapes from the officers of the law, seems to have been borrowed from Robert Greene's The third and last part of conny-catching (1592).[62] It is possible that Greene and Middleton were both familiar with the same low-life cheating, although some critics have argued that Middleton adopted the standpoint of the class a little lower than the aristocracy, and held the middle-class and labouring class in contempt. That is obviously an oversimplified view of his imaginative ability to get inside different people. However, Middleton did use Greene often, and so perhaps the Greene account ought to be regarded as a source.

The passage[63] in question concerns a solicitor in Paul's churchyard, and a low woman who is pretending to seek informal advice, albeit for a fee. She attracts his attention and steps up to him :

> giuing him his fee, which before her face he put vp into his purse, [hee] thrust it vnder his girdle againe : she proceeded to a verie sound discourse, whereto he listened with no litle attention. The time seruing fit for the fellows purpose, he came behind the Gentleman, and as many times one friend will familiarly with another, claps his handes ouer his eyes to make him guesse who he is, so did this companion, holding his handes fast ouer the Gentlemans eyes, saide : who am I ? twise or thrise, in which time the drab had gotten the purse and put it vp. The Gentleman thinking it [had] beene some merrie friend of his, reckened the names of three or foure, when letting him go, the craftic knaue dissembling a bashfull shame of what he had done, said : By my troth sir I crie ye mercy, as I came in at the

62. Source first identified by R.C. Bald, "The Sources of Middleton's City Comedies," pp381-382.
63. On pp. 158-159 (Vol. X) of The Life and Complete Works of Robert Greene, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London and Aylesbury, 1881-86).

> Church doore I tooke ye for such a one
> (naming a man) a verie friend of mine,
> whome you very much resemble.

The Gentleman in The Phoenix (IV.iii.69-77) plays the same trick and apologises similarly, whilst the Knight escapes.

V.i.278-end, in which Tangle is cured of his poisonous humour of litigancy, is borrowed from Ben Jonson's The Poetaster, V.iii., in which Crispinus is made to vomit up the hard words he has used. The Poetaster (1601) was produced by the Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel ; Paul's boys obviously required a repeat of the episode. Middleton converted it to a blood-letting episode : "Now burst out,/ Thou filthy stream of trouble, spite, and doubt!" (V.i.307-308). D.B. Dodson[64] doubted whether Middleton's scholarship would have extended to Jonson's original, Lucian's Lexiphanes ; Lexiphanes is made to be sick as Crispinus is. Jonson was no doubt annoyed by this borrowing ; together with a few others it may be the cause for his dislike of Middleton.

There are two other possible influences I should mention. Obviously, The Malcontent has the disguised-ruler plot that The Phoenix has ; and it has more. There is a traitor, Mendoza, who confides in the disguised true ruler, Malevole, in an effort to procure him as murderer of the usurping duke. Mendoza plans to marry Malevole's supposed widow, a virtuous matron who has experienced no good fortune since her husband disappeared. Finally, at court, summary justice is executed upon the miscreants ; Mendoza is thrown out like Proditor, complete indifference being shown to his ability to harm anyone. All is well under control pending the revelation of the disguised duke—thus making possible the achievement of ironic effects whilst the final downfall of the traitor is awaited. Yet the date of Marston's Malcontent makes it seem that Middleton wrote his play before Marston's was in print, and possibly before it was produced. M.L. Wine[65] in his recent edition settles for

64. Thomas Middleton's City Comedies, p.96.
65. The Malcontent, ed. M.L. Wine (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1964), pp.xiv-xvi.

1603 as the date of composition, but admits that the controversy is still open. If a date preceding that of The Phoenix's court performance —20 February 1604 (a date which Hillebrand and Dodson criticize)—could be definitely given, I would have more confidence in ascribing Middleton's indebtedness for the disguised-prince motif to Marston.

The second possible influence I bring up in order to show that Basilikon Doron was not the only quarry for political philosophy : William Jones' translation of Justus Lipsius' Sixe Bookes of Politickes or Civil Doctrine (1594)[66] has many of the details about statecraft that James' book has. In Lipsius' book are chapters dealing with lawyers who dictate to the commonwealth, with expedient government and how to deal with civil conspiracies, and advice on the use of dissimulation by a prince. The passage on royal guile (p. 113, chap. 13, bk. IV) makes the interesting suggestion that "the Prince be of a notable and excellent wit, and yet that he be able to intermingle that which is profitable, with that which is honest." Phoenix is, therefore, a Renaissance prince using all the virtuous resourceful guile of a Christian Machiavelli, and he remains "honest" in the very jaws of temptation at the Jeweller's house.

In the three plays dealt with in this chapter we find certain common features : an idealized pair of young lovers, of which the young man has some intrigue on foot which will secure his happiness (this element is faint in The Phoenix, which has only a bare hint of romance between Fidelio and Falso's neice) ; a dénouement scene which judges the crimes of the petty criminals from the sub-plot ; and the juxtaposition of a small, righteous group with a busy world of engaging sinners. Falso of The Phoenix is a triumph in this latter category. On the other hand, the continent reformer-prince, Phoenix, is sententious ; he sees the marriage of a virgin couple as the only real guarantee of the sanctity of wedlock (II.ii.164-192). There is no apparent ambiguity in the endorsement of this

66. Rowley refers to Lipsius in The Changeling, III.iii.187.

theme by Middleton ; the real ambiguity springs from his desire to pattern these early plays in a manner which does not reflect his inner convictions about human beings. He seems to find it hard to write convincingly about what he has been taught to approve of.

SOURCES

Main plot : One version of the "disguised-prince" play : ? Il giusto principe (printed 1622) ; ? John Marston, The Malcontent (printed 1604).

Subplot : The Harvey-Middleton quarrels; Robert Greene, The third and last part of conny-catching (1592) ; Ben Jonson, The Poetaster (1601).

CHAPTER THREE

The Unprincipled Comedy of Economic Exigency

By 1604 Middleton had settled in to the conditions which governed most of his working life. James, the new monarch, was installed on the throne, and he did not seem to be enthusiastic about the Middleton play he had seen. Marriage and a child had increased the need to sell plays regularly ; satirical work for the boys' companies had, of all the literary media Middleton had attempted, paid off best. The London scene was the one Middleton knew best and the one his audience knew best ; since it was scarcely romantic or exalted enough to inspire tragedy[1] or romance, it was evidently best anatomised—Ben Jonson, for example, had made a great success with his comic portrayals of Londoners.

The group of four comedies now to be considered forms a more homogeneous unity than any other group in Middleton's whole work. All four were written and produced between 1604 and 1607, and printed in the release of plays which followed the cessation of playing by the Paul's boys in 1606. Why they stopped acting is not clear ; at any rate, playscripts came on the market just after and these four comedies are dated 1607 or 1608. Middleton seems to have had nothing to do with their publication.

Readers of The Phoenix cannot fail to notice the functional quality of some of the figures ; characters like Proditor, Fidelio, Falso and Castiza dramatically personify motivating vices and virtues in the play. The play which I am treating as Middleton's next, Your Five Gallants, has an even more marked morality element ; the main characters are "not so much human beings as illustrations"[2]—representatives of the various methods a parasite could employ to pursue a career in London. The play has links with Jonson's comical satire when it depicts the humours of a gull like

1. Although Middleton did write a tragedy in 1606, now lost. See H.N. Hillebrand, "Thomas Middleton's The Viper's Brood," MLN, XLII (1927), 35-38.
2. Barker, Thomas Middleton, p.43.

Bungler, but it reaches further back into Tudor morality drama for its true antecedents.

Barker[3] thinks this was a Paul's boys' play, despite the title-page ascription to the company at Blackfriars, and that it was written no later than the Summer of 1606. Dodson[4] puts the date at c. 1607, on the ground that the plague referred to by Frippery in I.i. was that of 1607, when the Privy Council requested playing to be restrained. The play was entered on the Stationers' Register on 22 March 1607/8. Miss Clare Lee Colegrove,[5] in her introduction to the best text of the play I know, adhered to the 1607 date and treated the play as belonging to the Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars. The evidence for a production earlier than 1607 is not strong ; but the play has had material in it subtracted and transposed, which leads Baldwin Maxwell[6] to suspect revision after earlier performances. It would be uncritical to date this play after A Trick to Catch the Old One (1605-6), the best of the group.

1603, we recall, was a serious plague year, in which Anne Harvey and Allen Waterer died, along with 38,242 other people ; and then the next serious plague year was 1607. Even so, 1606-7 was no repeat of the horrors of 1603 ; from March of that year until twelve months later the theatres were closed. The playwrights must have had a very lean year. Middleton wrote his two pamphlets during the close season, and he would even then have had ample time to write the opening scenes of Your Five Gallants.[7] The reason I agree with Barker that this was first a Paul's and then a Blackfriars play is that A Trick to Catch the Old One (printed 1608) was first described as a Paul's play (Q1, 1608)

3. Barker, Thomas Middleton, p.164.
4. Thomas Middleton's City Comedies, p.133.
5. A Critical Edition of Thomas Middleton's "Your Five Gallants," unpublished University of Michigan dissertation, (1961), pp.1-13.
6. "Thomas Middleton's Your Five Gallants," PQ, XXX (1951), 30-39.
7. Details of the plagues are from F.P. Wilson, The Plague in Shakespeare's London (Oxford, 1927), pp.109-119.

and then afterwards as played both at Paul's and Blackfriars' (Q2, 1608). It follows that if Paul's boys did play Your Five Gallants, it must have been ready by 1606 ; in which case the plague referred to is that of 1603, in all probability.

If Middleton did work for the Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars (the Stationers' Register entry tells us that this was the company Your Five Gallants was performed by), he probably there met Robert Keysar, goldsmith and dramatic sponsor, the man who brought suit against him in the Viper and her Brood case. Keysar might well have arranged that the Paul's repertoire[8] was partially made over to his company of children at the Blackfriars. This latter company ceased playing at Blackfriars when the Blackfriars lease was surrendered to Burbage and the King's men in the autumn of 1609. Not until this date can we be certain that Middleton produced anything for an adult company.

A remarkable feature of Your Five Gallants is its wide range of settings—a pawnshop, a music-school, a gentleman's house, streets, the Mitre tavern, Combe Park (Kingston-on-Thames), St. Paul's middle aisle, and a bedchamber—a variety reminiscent of the public theatres which recalls a play like I Henry IV. It makes for a decidedly picaresque atmosphere, unlike The Phoenix's houses in a Ferrarese street or the various private chambers of that domestic immorality play, The Family of Love. Successive rather than simultaneous staging[9] must have been employed in producing the play.

Henry IV, Parts I (1598) and II (1600), were apparently great successes for the Chamberlain's Men at the Globe,[10] and they contained highway-

8. Marston's Parasitaster (1606) is another Paul's and Blackfriars' play.
9. For definition of these terms, see William A. Armstrong, The Elizabethan Private Theatres : Facts and Problems, The Society for Theatre Research Pamphlet Series : No. 6, (London, 1957-58).
10. Or perhaps at the Theatre, Shoreditch. The Chamberlain's men moved in 1599 from Shoreditch theatres to the Globe.

robbery and tavern scenes. Middleton's treatment of the Mitre tavern scene (II.iii.), where a disguised reformer Fitsgrave, alias Bouser, watches the proceedings to ascertain the true natures of the gallants, and of his cowardly highway robber Pursenet, (II.iii.), suggests an attempt to introduce some of the same visual comedy that Shakespeare has and, in large measure, to do it with the same comic disapproval. But Alfred Harbage[11] would deny even the intention on Middleton's part to share Shakespeare's values : "It is expecially instructive," he writes, "in plays where similarity in theme would lead us to expect similarity in treatment. Attempts on the virtue of citizen wives provide a subject for comedy at both types of theatre [i.e. the open-air public and indoor private theatres], but the difference between Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor at the Globe and Middleton's plays at Paul's is spectacular." Middleton is not so easily classifiable as this. As we have seen, he set out with an earnest desire to edify his readers, and he even meted out harshly satirical punishment on the young lechers seduced by the thought of the mature Mrs. Purge in The Family of Love. In fact, Your Five Gallants is imitative enough of what Harbage in his book calls public or popular morality to furnish judgments and penalties on all the offenders, not to mention a certain amount of exposure to shame and ridicule. There is a kind of middle period in Middleton's work, which comes later and is spent before the tragedies were written, in which I would agree that the moral and ethical values are definitely not those of Shakespeare or the "public theatre."

Your Five Gallants has many tissues of plot running through it, some of them incomplete like the Pyamont episode in IV.vi. ; Baldwin Maxwell[12] thinks the episodic structure is "the natural result of [the] division of interest among so many characters," and adds, "There is, however, a possibility that the structure was not always so

11. Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions (New York, 1952), p.87.
12. "Middleton's Your Five Gallants," p.31.

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episodic as appears in the printed texts, that the interrelation of some scenes may have been lost by the printer's working from a manuscript copy in which some of the sheets were out of their proper place." Miss Colegrove, by boldly rearranging scenes, prints the most fluent text of the play to date.

Those parts of the plot which resemble Henry IV, Parts I and II, may as well be mentioned first. In I Henry IV, II.ii., Prince Hal and Poins, assisted by Falstaff, Gadshill, Bardolph and Peto, rob and bind a group of travellers, just as Pursenet and his Boy do with Tailby. Within the same scene (III.ii.) Pursenet and his Boy lose all they have stolen when Fitsgrave, the hero of the play, proves too strong and beats Pursenet. By the end of the equivalent scene in Shakespeare, Falstaff and his fellows have lost all they have gained. In III.v. of Your Five Gallants occurs the most striking parallel of all ; Pursenet, who had received a three-inch wound, is in company with all the gallants when Fitsgrave (in his disguise as Master Bouser as at the time of the attempted robbery), asks him how he got the wound :

> Pursenet. Faith, by a paltry fray, in Coleman Street.
> Fitsgrave. Combe Park he would say. [Aside]
> Pursenet. No less than three at once sir,
> Made a triangle with their swords and daggers,
> And all opposing me.
> Fitsgrave. And amongst these three only one hurt hurt you sir ?
> Pursenet. Ex for ex.[13]
>
> (III.v.56-62)

It is scarcely necessary to compare with this Falstaff's famous defence of his flight at the Boar's Head Tavern :

> Falstaff. ...Here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me.
> Prince. What, four ? Thou saidst but two even

13. Pursenet's phrase may mean something like Falstaff's "tap for tap" (II Henry IV, II.i.187), or "exchange for exchange," according to Miss Colegrove.

now ...
Falstaff. These four came all afront and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus.
(I Henry IV, II.iv.216-224)

And so on. (Harbage might have gained a valid point for his argument by reminding us that whereas Falstaff's lying exaggeration is cruelly exposed by the Prince, so that the old bluffer is made into an undignified butt of laughter, Pursenet, a meaner thief, is scarcely stigmatised at all for his thieving, cowardice and lying.)

The tavern scene in Your Five Gallants (II.iii.) was, no doubt, conceived with this same scene, II.iv. of I Henry IV, in mind, especially the business of baiting Francis the drawer. II Henry IV, II.iv. also seems to have contributed to the Middleton scene, in which Fitsgrave, as Bouser, sits through a session of dicing and drinking whilst the gallants, complete with their courtesans, expose and disgrace themselves. In II.iv. of II Henry IV, Falstaff and Bardolph are in the midst of a reprehensible evening at the Boar's Head whilst the Prince and Poins are, disguised as drawers, observing everything. However, whereas Fitsgrave is rendered powerless to do more than make one or two scathing asides, Hal drives Falstaff to confess his "wilful abuse." Harbage[14] comments that "One could almost suppose [the scene] sat ill on his conscience, and that he was resolved to make all the participants pay for our ... amusement." The effect of this comparison is to show Middleton to be far less concerned than Shakespeare with the moral tone; the incidents are designed to allow Middleton to satirise the vice of London society as it exhibits itself.

What prevents Middleton's play from being an irresponsible display of often-successful vice is the fact that the five vicious characters are really five ciphers, men who have particular abuses to illustrate and who cannot therefore display much individuality. As in a Tudor moral

14. Rival Traditions, p.199.

interlude like Magnificence (1516), by John Skelton, the gallants assume names for themselves which hide their trades, and pretend to be what they are not, with disastrous financial results on those they deceive. Magnificence is a useful play to compare in method with Middleton's comedy. In Skelton's play there are five courtiers, Fancy, Counterfeit Countenance, Crafty Conveyance, Cloaked Collusion and Courtly Abusion, who each ingratiates himself with the prince and practises deceit on him. In actual fact we learn most by watching their stratagems and hearing their moral beliefs from their own lips, and we see little of Magnificence's wealth crumbling away. The courtiers cheat each other (stage 2, scene 18)[15] and quarrel amongst themselves, but finally, once they know each other's characters, they agree to unite :

Counterfeit Countenance : Why, shall we dwell
together all three ?

Crafty Conveyance : Why man, it were too
great a wonder
That we three gallants
should be long asunder.

Counterfeit Countenance : For Cock's heart, give
me thy hand !

Fancy : By the mass, for ye are
able to destroy an
whole land.

(Stage 2, scene 9, 16-20)

Each uses his particular talent to ruin society (if we think of Magnificence as the state—he represents Henry VIII, who equals, in Tudor politics, the state), either as a counterfeiter of maidenheads and other things, like Counterfeit Countenance (compare Primero), or as a parasitic gallant living off his good looks, like Courtly Abusion (compare Tailby). To form a composite vice ring, they unite, just as Middleton's five do :

Goldstone. 'Slife, why were we strangers all this
while ? 'Sfoot, I perceive we are all

15. Quotation from The Complete Poems of John Skelton, Laureate, ed. Philip Henderson (London, 1948).

natural brothers ! A pox on's all, are we found, i' faith ? ...

All. Sweet Master Goldstone.

Goldstone. You lacked spirit in your company till I came among you : here be five on's ; let's but glue together, why now the whole world shall not come between us.

Pursenet. If we be true among ourselves.

(IV.viii. 213-215, 230-234)

In both plays the vice characters are not destroyed, but merely find that they have overreached themselves. Placing Your Five Gallants in the moral interlude tradition helps to dispel any notions about a closely interlocked struggle between the forces of vice and virtue. The vices of interludes are ciphers who do not have to pay in terms of personal retribution for abuses and malpractises. Miss J.R. Sargent looked for a conflict of personalities but found that "the struggle between Fitsgrave and the corrupt gallants is a singularly undramatic one."[16] It is what they are struggling over, the virtue personified by Katherine, and London society's standards, that is the centre of the play. The parallel with Magnificence prompts such a reading, without of course proving that Middleton had read Skelton's interlude.

The plots which occupy the five gallants naturally have a few analogues and parallels here and there in Elizabethan rogue literature. The conny-catching pamphlets are most useful in this respect ; in the next few paragraphs, I shall set out what is in essence the best of R.C. Bald's,[17] Mildred Christian's[18] and Margery Fisher's[19] work on Middleton's City comedy sources, adding a little incident or two from my own observation. It is an episodic method to suit an episodic play.

16. Moral and Social Bases, p.77.
17. "Sources of City Comedies," pp.373-387.
18. Non-Dramatic Sources for the Rogues in Middleton's Plays (Baltimore, 1936).
19. "Notes on the Sources of some Incidents in Middleton's London Plays," RES, XV (1939), 283-293.

Goldstone, the "cheating-gallant" ("Cheting law," according to Greene,[20] "is play at false dice"), carries out a number of successful ruses in the course of Your Five Gallants : he steals, with effrontery, a ring from the Second Courtesan (II.i.) : he has two fake gold beakers made (II.i.) and he exchanges them for the valuable ones at the Mitre tavern (II.iii.) : he plays with false dice in league with his man Fulke, whom he affects to despise, at the Mitre, and wins close on eighty angels (II.iii.) : he steals a gilt goblet by concealing it, and when it is missed by the Vintner and his drawers, organises a collection to pay for it amongst his friends (contributing ten shillings himself) (II.iii.) : he takes Fitsgrave's new cloak from his lodging before his face on a jocular pretext (IV.iii.), and pawns it to Frippery (IV.iv.) : he has himself invited by Bungler to Mrs. Newcut's house for dinner (IV.v.), turns up in disguise and claims to be a cousin (IV.vii.), steals the silver bell-salt as a joke with Bungler privy to it, sneaks out pretending to hide and returns (minus the bell-salt) as himself (IV.vii.) : he is made welcome, and enjoys both the lady and her hospitality in her chamber, accepting a ring from her (IV.viii.). Finally, with nice irony, he is made to marry Mrs. Newcut (V.ii.).

Here there are seven separate occasions of profit, and at least three of them have parallels in earlier literature. Goldstone's substitution of the two fake gold beakers and thieving of the gilt goblet bear some resemblance to the deeds of the "conicatching Cocledemoy" of Marston's The Dutch Courtesan (played 1603-04, printed 1605), when he steals a nest of goblets in I.i. from Mulligrub's tavern. His method of fleecing his companions in the great dicing scene (II.iii.), especially Tailby, reminds Bald (p. 379) of a passage in A Notable Discouery of Coosnage (1591)[21] in which a conny pawns his personal belongings in hope for his luck to change and is still de-

20. A Notable Discouery of Coosnage (1591), in Grosart's Greene, X, 36.
21. Grosart's Greene, X, 28.

ceived. Mildred Christian[22] draws a parallel between the concealed goblet trick and one which George Peele plays, in his case with a rapier. The parallel is not very close, and the Merrie Conceited Jests were not published till 1607.

Bald also cites (p. 378) what is the best parallel—one concerning the bell-salt, from Samuel Rowlands' Greene's Ghost Haunting Conycatchers (1602)[23], which even has a small verbal parallel :

> There was not long since one of our former profession, hauing intelligence of a Citizen that inuited three or foure of his friends to dinner, came a little before dinner time, and marked when the guests were all come : when they were all come, as he thought, knowing the goodman of the house safe (for he was not yet come from the exchange) steps vp the stayres boldly, and comes into the room where the guests were : when he comes in he salutes them, and askes if his cosen were not yet come from the Exchange. They told him no. No (saith he) me thinks he is very long, it is past twelue of the clocke. Then after a turn or two, In faith Gentlemen (quoth my new come guest) it were good to doe something whereat we may be mery against my cosen comes home, and to that intent I will take this Salt and hide it, that when he misseth it, we shall see what he will say to my cosen his wife : so hee tooke the Salt, and put it in his pocket, and walked a turne or two more about the roome : within a while when the other guests were busie in talk, he stepp downe the stayres faining to make water : but when he was downe, he turned downe Theeues allie and neuer returned againe. The Citizen when he came home bid his friends welcome, and anon he mist the Salt that should be set on the table, called his wife to know if there were neuer a Salt in the house : His wife busie about dinner, tooke her husband vp, as women at such times will do, when they are a little troubled (for a little thing troubles them God wot) and asked him if he had no eyes in his head. No, nor you wife (quoth

22. "Middleton's Acquaintance with the Merrie Conceited Jests of George Peele," PMLA, L (1935), 759.
23. Ed. J.O. Halliwell (London, 1860), pp. 54-55.

> hee) if you say there be any now : So there past many shrewd and hot words betweene them. At length the guests vnwilling they should disagree on so small a trifle, they vp and told how one came in and asked for his cosen, and tooke away the Salt, meaning to make a little mirth at dinner. But when they saw he returned no more, they contented themselues with patience, and went to dinner, as men at such times vse to do, with heauy hearts and cold stomaches.

Here is certainly the source for IV.vii. of Your Five Gallants, with a few hints in Middleton's dramatisation to clinch the case. A man on the Exchange, according to Rowlands, must expect to dine somewhat late—at least not before midday. Elizabethan dinner-time was usually around eleven,[24] but Mrs. Newcut's household is also late :

> Mrs. Newcut. Why, how now, sirrah ? upon twelve of the clock, and not the cloth laid yet ? must we needs keep Exchange time still ?
> (IV.vii.1-3)

Middleton's habitual irony, manifested in the cheater's insolence, pervades the episode—whereas Rowland's knave merely disappears with the bell-salt, Goldstone hides it and returns for the dinner.

The most successful of the group of criminal gallants after Goldstone is Pursenet. He manages to steal Katherine's chain of pearl (I.ii.), Fitsgrave's jewel (II.i.), the gallants' money (II.iii.)—all these through his Boy ; to rob Tailby in Combe Park (III.ii.) and Pyamont of £40 in Paul's (IV.vi.). Of these five exploits, I have already compared the robbing of Tailby in Combe Park with Falstaff's adventure on Gad's Hill. The last trick, that of robbing Pyamont by pretending to faint, finds its source in Greene's The Second Part of Conny-Catching (1591),[25] in

24. See R. Warwick Bond's note to IV.iii. 189-191 in his edition of The Taming of the Shrew (London, 1929).
25. Cited from M. G. Christian, Sources for the Rogues, p.6.

an anecdote called "A Kinde conceipt of a Foist performed in Paules." In both instances the scene is set in the middle walk of St. Paul's, and at their first attempt both Greene's "foists" and Middleton's "boy" are thwarted because the "conny" keeps his hands in his pockets. Unfortunately IV.vi. of Middleton's play has a lacuna in the text, with the result that the swooning incident is merely reported by the outraged Pyamont (IV.viii.). Apparently Pursenet fainted, and when the countryman rushed to his assistance, his Boy cut the man's purse ; just so, in Greene's anecdote the decoy passed out in front of the farmer whilst the foist drew his purse.

None of the other gallants is sufficiently a rogue to be involved in much conny-catching business ; Tailby lives off women through his attractions, Primero promotes and runs a school of high-class courtesans, and Frippery deals in exorbitant usury and pawnage. Middleton links all this society of cheating and vice together by showing the progress of a valuable item through it ; both R.C. Bald and Miss J.R. Sargent noticed this as a unifying symbol, and I believe it had some topical significance. A chain of pearl, originally belonging to Fitsgrave, slips from hand to hand, until it returns to its rightful owner, Katherine, at the end, and it may conceivably be intended as a symbol of her chastity. In I.ii. Fitsgrave gives a chain of pearl to Katherine as a pledge :

> Unequall'd virgin, from your servant's arm
> Vouchsafe this worthless favour to accept,
> The hallow'd beads, ...
> (ll. 20-22)

It is a token of his cognisance of her good name and of his intention to maintain it. In the same scene Pursenet's boy steals her chain, thus illustrating the way her good name would be treated in the gallants' hands. For instance, in IV.viii. Goldstone suggests that whoever wins her can set up a superb façade, with a big mansion, for the rest of the gallants. In II.i. the First Courtesan, Tailby's admirer, accepts the chain from Pursenet, but grants him no favours in return.

Tailby, on his way to an assignation with a married woman, is relieved of it by Pursenet (III.ii.), and he confronts the First Courtesan with the truth of her dishonourable dealing. The First Courtesan has the matter out with Tailby, since Pursenet is crafty enough to have claimed he saw the chain of pearl on another woman's arm, and Tailby thus works out who robbed him. The chain's quality of virtue is thus sufficient to expose robbery and lying. Pursenet pawns the chain of pearl to Frippery, and redeems it with the money stolen from Pyamont. Pyamont accosts Pursenet when he recognises him later, causing him to drop the chain of pearl ; Goldstone picks it up from the pavement and is arrested at Tailby's suit as a thief. Pursenet comes back to collect it, gets it easily from the willing Goldstone, and only by discrediting Tailby does he manage to stave off the constables (IV.viii.). Pursenet pawns the chain to Frippery for a masquing suit (IV.viii.), who decides to present it as a special token to Katherine at the masque. She recognises it and Pursenet's boy is caught as a result (V.ii.).

Pursenet's original gift to the First Courtesan has a somewhat interesting analogue in an almost contemporary incident—that is, if we date Your Five Gallants 1603-4. In a poem called A Chaine of Pearle (1603),[26] by Lady Diana Primrose, celebrating Elizabeth's recent reign, a piece of Court gossip turns up :

> And here I may not silent overpasse
> That noble Lady of the Court, which was
> Sollicited by Taxis that great Don,
> Embassador for Spaine (when shee was gone)
> Who to obtaine his will, gave her a Chaine
> Of most rare orient Pearle, hoping to gaine
> That worthy Lady to his lust ; but shee,
> That well perceiv'd his Spanish Policy,
> His faire Chaine kept, but his foule offer scorn'd,
> That sought (thereby) her husband to have horn'd ;
> Taxis repulst, sent to her for his Chaine,
> But (as a trophie) shee did it retaine ;
> Which noble president may all excite,
> To keepe this pearle which is so orient bright.
> (The Second Pearle.—Chastity, ll.31-44).

26. Reprinted in John Nichols, The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth (1823), III, 643-644.

This is more or less the unfortunate Pursenet's experience, except that he is dealing with a courtesan, and Frippery's too at the end of the play. Lady Diana explicitly calls her poem "Chastity" and the pearl in the chain "Virginall/ In Virgins." It is possible that some of this significance is embodied in the power of the chain to elude the gallants.

Middleton ended the play with a moralising masque, and a particularly witty adaptation of the emblem convention. As a dramatic example he had before him, in a play for the boys, Marston's semi-humorous masque, containing emblems, in Antonio and Mellida (1602), in which Galeatzo, Matzagente and Balurdo present their imprese in order to win their ladies (V.i.173-238).[27] Balurdo, for instance, has a "faire rul'd singing booke," the word for which is "Perfect, if it were prickt." But the convention of humorous imprese was not original with Marston, for if Middleton had known Samuel Daniel's translation of The Worthy Tract of Paulus Iouius (1585), a little manual of emblems and devices, he would have read that "A ridiculous mot or posie is not to be vsed but in some occasion of maskes, or to quip an enemy ... ." ("To the Reader," A_{v}).

When Bouser, the scholar (Fitsgrave's alter ego), is requested to supply the devices and words, he gives two distinct translation—one for Pyamont and the other gentlemen, one for the five gallants. The devices—a purse upended for Pursenet, three silver dice for Goldstone, a pearl in a cave for Primero, a cuckoo in a tree for Frippery, a candle in a corner for Tailby—can be shown to have "corresponding ideas and similar engravings, but nothing that may be termed an exact duplication."[28] Hoole has worked through a great deal of emblem literature, and points out various resemblances ; the greatest number are from Ieronimo Ruscelli's Le Imprese Illustri (Venice, 1584). Probably Middleton's use of them for the purpose of ridicule has distorted their original appearance. The "words" or poesies themselves may well be distantly related to Middleton's Latin days, as Hoole shows ;

27. References are to the edition by H. Harvey Wood, 3 vols.,(Edinburgh and London, 1934-39).
28. William S. Hoole, "Thomas Middleton's Use of Imprese in Your Five Gallants," SP, XXXI (1934), 221.

Baldwin Maxwell[29] points to a quotation from Horace's De Arte Poetica which has been facetiously treated.

The character of Mrs. Newcut deserves some attention ; I know of no source for her, and one may assume Middleton invented her rôle. She is an early portrait of the mature married woman (her second husband dies at sea in the course of the play) with lecherous desires, a forerunner of the evil Livia in Women Beware Women. But she also looks back to the "abused widow" type of which Castiza in The Phoenix is the earliest example—for instance in the scenes with the predatory Goldstone. Katherine is the chaste opposite of this lusty widow who visits Primero's establishment to select for herself the most agreeable young man, and we may plausibly identify in the scholarly young reformer, Fitsgrave, who wins Katherine's hand, something of Middleton himself. Primero, like the gallants in The Family of Love, is punished by a whipping for his lechery. Even so, it is hard to feel that any real ascendancy has been achieved by Middleton's good characters, for as Miss Colegrove[30] says, "his rogues trample down his moral maxims and, by sheer energy, dominate the last scene as much as they have the play as a whole."

SOURCES

Overall structure :	Moral Interlude Type ; cf. John Skelton's Magnificende (1516).
Rogue incidents :	William Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I (1598) ; Robert Greene, A Notable Discouery of Coosnage and The Second Part of Conny-Catching (both 1591) ; Samuel Rowlands, Greene's Ghost Haunting Cony-Catchers (1602) ; Lady Diana Primrose, A Chaine of Pearle (1603) ; hints from John Marston, Antonio and Mellida (1602).

29. "Middleton's Your Five Gallants," p.36.
30. Edition, p.39.

The second play in this group, Michaelmas Term, is a much better play than Your Five Gallants in all respects. Michaelmas Term[31] is, like the rest of this group of Paul's comedies, not easy to date. Michaelmas term ran from 29 September to the second week in November, and it referred to one of the law sessions at Westminster ; it seems likely that the play was actually put on during one of the Michaelmas terms[32] from 1603 to 1607 (the comedy being entered on the Stationers' Register in May 1607). The guesses of scholars within these limits—set by James' accession because of satire on his knightings, and by the quarto's licensing—show no accord. Professor W. Power[33] usefully summarises a number of theories, and properly refuses to accept the evidence of the execution mentioned at II.iii.226-229, since E.K. Chambers, R.C. Bald and Baldwin Maxwell have all interpreted it differently. He settles for "1605, before May," because from May to September of that year Jonson and Chapman were gaoled for their share in Eastward Ho !, a play which satirises James' knightings also. Middleton would scarcely have risked the same punishment after their disaster, he feels. Against this we must set Baldwin Maxwell's[34] point that feeling was running highest against the Scots throughout 1605, for the play carries plenty of anti- Scots satire. The player who took the rôle of Andrew Gruel (alias Lethe) may well have perfected a Scots accent for the performance. Maxwell[35] plausibly suggests that the impudence of the Paul's boys in putting on this play may have contributed to their mysterious suppression or winding-up in 1606. Middleton's name, it is worth noting,

31. There is an edition, written in 1941 as a University of Wisconsin dissertation, by George R. Price, who subsequently became a noted Middleton scholar. I have not been able to see this dissertation.
32. See Michaelmas Term's speech in the Induction, ll. 8-9.
33. "Middleton vs. James," p.534.
34. "Middleton's Michaelmas Term," PQ, XXII (1943), 31.
35. "Middleton's Michaelmas Term," p. 35.

did not appear on the title page of the 1607 edition of the play. The autumn of 1605, it seems to me, seems a reasonable date for its production.[36]

Michaelmas Term appears as an introducer of the play in an Induction, which is not unlike the device used to present A Game at Chesse (1624); both introducers, Michaelmas Term and Ignatius Loyola, go back to Marlowe's Machiavel prologue to The Jew of Malta (?1590). The Induction to The Malcontent (1604), which is in playlet form like Middleton's, must have influenced the opening of the present play. The play, says R.H. Barker,[37] has only one story to tell, "though there are several subsidiary episodes involving an upstart toothdrawer's son and a country wench who becomes a successful whore." The central story of the gulling of Easy, the landed heir, by Ephestian Quomodo, the City woollen-draper, is adhered to so closely that the unity of effect thus gained almost compensates for certain faults the comedy has. This story is created out of a variety of plot materials, ranging from rogue pamphlet to contemporary incident. Three works of Greene seem to have been the main quarry, with possible verbatim help from Thomas Dekker. Greene's Defence of Conny-Catching (1592)[38] has a longish tale called "A pleasant tale of an Vsurer," about an old man who contracts an heir into mortgaging land for a cash loan, and afterwards seizes it as forfeit. The young man has a wife who cleverly extricates him from the situation and regains the land, resulting in the final and utter discredit of the usurer. The other tales concerning the entrapment of a young heir into a seemingly harmless agreement, advanced by various scholars, do not overlap the Defence tale. R.C. Bald,[39] followed by Mildred Christian,[40] finds Middleton

36. D.B. Dodson in his dissertation sought to limit the play to 1603-04, on the basis of a pun on Ralegh's name in IV.iv. This is somewhat too early for the play's style.
37. Thomas Middleton, p.47.
38. Grosart's Greene, XI, 54-62.
39. "Sources of City Comedies," p.381.
40. Sources for the Rogues, p.7.

indebted to Greene's A Notable Discouery of Coosnage (1591)[41] in regard to the method employed to engage Easy's bond in the first instance. This is probably correct, and accounts for the vivid scene in II.i. where Easy is run into debt in an ordinary by Shortyard. Margery Fisher[42] has an even closer parallel situation, but I think she has misstated the matter. In Greene's Thirde and last Part of Conny-catching (1592), the pickpockets obtain information about a gentleman from his servant, and then go to his master and feign familiarity. The gentleman cannot place them at all, but assumes their bonhomie is genuine, takes them into his confidence and is robbed. In Michaelmas Term a character named Cockstone, who seems to have been intended as a conny-catcher, passes information about Easy on to Rearage and Salewood, who seem to be "setters." But Cockstone disappears from the play without ever communicating with Quomodo, and Rearage is a bitter enemy of Quomodo. I suggest that the passage at I.i.50ff. is purely expositional material, for Shortyard and Quomodo run the whole conny-catching by themselves ; although it does look as if Middleton contemplated employing Cockstone in a manner more integral to the plot. The conversation in I.i. about Salewood's cousin, who is unmarried and has lost her virginity, and the introduction of Cockstone, may well be loose ends which Middleton would have removed in a revision. If Cockstone were playing conny-catcher to Shortyard's setter and verser, Miss Fisher's quotation would be to the point.

To return, then, to A pleasant tale of an Vsurer. A young gentleman of Cockermouth is already in debt when the tale begins, and so he determines to go to an old "pennyfather" to borrow money by laying his land in mortgage. The loan, two hundred marks, is to be made over a three-year period. From the outset, the Usurer lusts after the young man's land, which abuts onto his own, and so he suggests a more complicated arrangement of loan and security than a

41. Grosart's Greene, X, 17-18.
42. "The Sources of Middleton's London Plays," RES, XV (1939), 284.

simple bond. The young man, who like Easy has a "liberall nature," is persuaded to make a deed of gift of his lands without condition or promise to some faithful friend or other, in whom he can repose trust. The young man thanks the Usurer, grateful beyond words, and decides on the Usurer himself as the man to whom to make the deed of gift. This step immediately puts us in mind of Middleton's characters' typically ironic mistakes, and it resembles what happens in Michaelmas Term.

By II.iii. Easy and Blastfield (Shortyard in disguise) have plunged themselves deep into debt until they are in need of immediate cash. They visit Quomodo's woollen-drapery shop ; Quomodo claims he cannot help them at that moment, but he is able to suggest a more complex arrangement to borrow the necessary amount. Two hundred pounds-worth of cloth, he urges, could be taken up instead of cash. Greene, in A Quippe for an Vpstart Courtier (1592),[43] tells us this was a common ploy :

> ueluet breeches excepted against fower of them and said they were none of his friendes, that was the marchant, goldsmith, mercer and draper : his allegations were these, that they were all fethered of one winge to fetch in young Gentlemen by commodities vnder the colour of lending of mony : for the Marchant deliuered ... browne paper or whatsoeuer else ... which when the poore Gentleman came to sell againe, hee coulde not make threescore and ten in the hundred besides the vsvry ... [the] Draper, he fetcheth them off for liuery cloth and cloth for six moneths & six, & yet hath he more knacks in his budget, for hee hath so darke a shop that no man can wel choose a peece of cloth....

Indeed, the idea for Quomodo's dealings may well have germinated in this sketch, and it is to be noted that the practise of "false light" in his shop is alluded to and, just after, "short measure." Blastfield and Easy agree to let Quomodo sell the material, and a scrivener is sent for. A month's grace is agreed upon, and Easy

43. Grosart's Greene, XI, 276-277.

signs his name as surety to back Blastfield's.

Middleton adds several diverting turns of intrigue to his narrative source ; the cloth comes back as unsaleable, and must go to a cheapjack dealer (Falselight, the second of Quomodo's swindling "spirits"), who gives only sixty pounds for the two hundred pounds-worth of material. R.C. Bald mentions that this sort of ruse was being worked in London at the time, and cites the case of Drew Woodleff of Aylesbury from Leslie Hotson's[44] book on the death of Marlowe. Ingram Frizer offered to loan sixty pounds to Woodleff, and, after Woodleff had committed himself, said he would have to accept it—in cannon—on Tower Hill. These Frizer sold (Frizer claimed) for thirty pounds, after Woodleff had contracted for a debt of sixty pounds ; and ultimately Woodleff's land in Buckinghamshire had to form part of the security on a debt of repayment which grew and grew. A second diversion from Greene's tale is introduced because at first Easy signs away no land : he signs it away only when Blastfield's disappearance causes pressure to be brought to bear upon him. Middleton's interest in thus complicating the plot, apart from indulging his virtuosity in construction, seems to be to illustrate how barren Quomodo is of natural scruple or emotion, and how full of sympathy is Thomasine, Quomodo's wife, as she watches the aggravation of Easy's plight. This implicit method of commenting removes the need for a reformer like Fitsgrave or a repentance like Penitent Brothel's.

In III.ii. the two grips of Quomodo's vice, Shortyard and Falselight, are screwed home to clamp Easy firmly in Quomodo's power and to compel him to sign away his land. This is achieved in a casual manner through two solid citizens (Shortyard and Falselight again), who offer to settle the debt for a bond of body, goods and land. Easy firmly believes he can meet this bond (III.iv.185-187), and Greene's unnamed young man does meet his bond. The Usurer, however, says he would rather have the forfeiture ; Quomodo hesitates about having bond or cash, and settles for land (IV.i.). After the land is lost, both swindlers

44. J.L. Hotson, The Death of Christopher Marlowe (London, 1925), pp.46-48.

become condescendingly generous : Greene's Usurer offers the young man priority of tenancy on his former land, and Quomodo, with the amusing effrontery of Middleton's most monstrous villains, declares :

> If it please you sir, you know the house ; you may visit us often, and dine with us once a quarter.
>
> (IV.i.58-59)

The house, of course, is Easy's own country seat.

Greene finishes his story by telling how the Usurer finally fell. The second aspect of the Usurer's greed was his interest in sex, in particular the young man's wife. He visits the young wife (when her husband is away) to indulge "an amorous wehe or two." She traps him in a window-frame, and nails his ears to the wooden "stanshel" (upright) outside with the help of her maids.[45] A judgment-scene follows, the young wife declaring before an assembly of neighbours that "I my selfe wil bee Justice, Judge, and Executioner." The Usurer confesses his deceit, and he is required to repay the two hundred marks and return the land. Thus it "came to the eares of the worshipful of the country, who sate in commission vppon it, and found out the coossenage of the Vsurer."

It is Quomodo who has the young wife in Middleton's version of the story, because Middleton wishes to make his swindler lose more than he had gained. Quomodo's grasping after wealth sterilises his ability to care properly for his wife :

> to get riches and children too, 'tis more than one man can do : and I am of those citizens' minds that say, let our wives make shift for children and they will, they get none of us ; and I cannot think, but he that has both much wealth and many children has had more helps coming in than himself.
>
> (IV.i.35-40)

So Easy wins Thomasine as well as his land back again, because Quomodo is foolish enough to

45. Easy, too, "thirsts the execution" of Shortyard's ears (V.i.23, 47).

test his wife's affection by feigning death. In a courtroom scene in V.iii., Quomodo is compelled to confess his methods of deceit. He perhaps regains his wife, but ends as a comic cuckold bereft of all his gains. We should note that Easy does not marry the young virginal daughter of Quomodo, Susan, but his wife ; of course this mature woman is, to Middleton, much more of a prize than any girl could be. Miss Joan Sargent[46] suggests that the turns of plot here hark back to the myth which tells "how the New Year slew the Old Year and took his mate, the Earth, for his own ... This myth also bears certain obvious likenesses to the story of Oedipus." There can be no doubt that this piquant situation, wherein a younger man takes the virtuous wife from her older, worthless husband, appealed very greatly to Middleton, for he employs it both early and later, for instance in Hengist King of Kent. When he varies the outcome of such a triangle, two men and one married woman, the issue may even be tragic.

Perhaps Middleton used incidents from other sources in the construction of the complicated gulling of Easy. Miss Lucetta J. Teagarden[47] discusses the possibility that Dekker's Lanthorne and Candlelight is the source for the primary fleecing of Easy, but has to admit that the pamphlet was published too late, being dated 1608. She is driven to alternative hypotheses : either that Dekker had a hand in the play, or that Middleton saw Dekker's work in manuscript. In chapter three of his book, Dekker tells "How Gentlemen are cheated at Ordinaries," by being encouraged to dice wildly until the ready supply of cash on credit has trapped them into the power of an old usurer. The usurer then contrives to let the day of the bond go by. Particularly significant in this narrative are the bird and net imagery, which Middleton[48] has too, and a certain pun on dice as bones, the bones of dead queans (compare II.i.142-144). In chapter four, Dekker relates "the Manner of vndooing Gentlemen by taking vp

46. Moral and Social Bases, p.143.
47. "The Dekker-Middleton problem in Michaelmas Term," Studies in English, Department of English, The University of Texas (1945-46) pp.49-58.
48. Miss Joan Sargent writes well about the imagery, which is Middleton's first sustained attempt at it. See pp. 125-126 of Moral and Social Bases.

of commodities" ; four gallants strike up a friendship with a conny, persuade him to take up a loan in commodities instead of cash, swindle him of thirty pounds in the hundred in the conversion, and disappear when repayment day comes. All put their names to the bond, but only the landowning conny has anything to lose by signing it. Of course, he is ruined.

As Miss Teagarden says, it is prima facie more likely that Middleton combined these two ways of making a young landowner forfeit his estate than that Dekker divided a single episode in Middleton's play. Dekker possibly related the anecdotes to Middleton before he published them, having gleaned them from current tavern gossip ; an actual occurrence perhaps underlies both versions.

Quomodo is an overreacher very like Volpone. No doubt his feigned death and the doublecrossing by Shortyard are borrowed from Jonson's play (acted 1605). In V.ii. Volpone requires Mosca to give out that he is dead, because he wants to see how the legacy-hunters will then react, and to pique them he passes the title to Mosca. In each case the overreacher's body is disposed of without difficulty. Volpone adopts the disguise of a Commendadoro to observe the consternation of his gulls, and Quomodo takes on the rôle of beadle to spy on his family. Both tricksters are quickly double-crossed by their trusted spirits, Mosca and Shortyard, and in each case this last trick turns out to be utterly disastrous, disastrous to the point where the overreacher has to drop all pretence at disguise in the courtroom. Mosca is condemned to the galleys, and Shortyard is banished.

The action of the subplot is not really separate from that of the main plot. Andrew Lethe is connected with the main plot by his courtship of Susan Quomodo, and rogues like Dick Hellgill and Mother Gruel by their connection with Lethe. The Country Wench's father is an example of Middleton's symmetrical design in contrasting characters with one another ; Lethe employs his mother to act as bawd for him, and the Country Wench her father as her servant. In each case the parent does not recognise the child, which I assume is meant to illustrate the

tendency of London values to invert the normal order of relationships. Lethe's sin, of adultery with the Country Wench, in which the pair are taken red-handed, may have been inspired by the Biblical account of the woman taken in adultery. Moral regeneration seems, however, not to be the solution for this scapegrace, who is forced to marry the Wench and is condemned to a whipping for lechery in addition.

The play is a little thin in respect of the dialogue, like the other early plays, although the portrayal of Quomodo is a distinctive achievement. Still, the scale of the gulling and of the prizes involved is rather small, smaller even than the cheating in Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts (1621), which has a lesser Volpone named Sir Giles Overreach. The courtroom ending, too, harks back to Middleton's earlier comedy, and he seems about this time to have realized its very artificial character ; for after Michaelmas Term he is more careful in his method of condemning the evil, the ridiculous and the vain.

SOURCES

Main plot : Robert Greene, A Notable Discouery of of Coosnage (1591) ; The Defence of Conny-Catching (1592) ; A Quippe for an Vpstart Courtier (1592) ; ? Thomas Dekker, Lanthorne and Candlelight (1608) ; Ben Jonson, Volpone (1606).

Minor action : No source known.

The kind of young hero who triumphs in the two foregoing comedies now begins to dominate Middleton's next comedies for the boys. A Mad World My Masters, although at least more entertaining than Your Five Gallants, is similarly episodic and somewhat diffuse. Perhaps the picaresque play went down well at Paul's, where drama with a diversity of incident rather than powerful characterisation was the staple of the repertoire. The date of the play is again a matter for conjecture, although

E.K. Chambers'[49] attempt to establish a backward limit by referring to Nicholas Breton's pamphlet A Merrie Dialogve Betvvixt The Taker and Mistaker (1603), known also as A Mad World My Masters, is based on an error ; "the 1603 edition had not this title," says Breton's editor,[50] "which was added to the edition of 1635." The title of Middleton's play was perhaps proverbial, and in any case Breton has no influence on the comedy. Of the many editions in dissertation form,[51] only M. J. Taylor[52] finds that satire in the pamphlet on Jacobean knightings (p. 4, ll.57-58 and p. 56, ll. 1040-41) and on a Puritan sect (p. 15, l.255) might have been carried over into the play ; but he admits that the resemblances are of the most general kind.

Since A Mad World was a Paul's play, its forward limit is ca. 1606.[53] One of its episodes seems to be borrowed from The Merrie Conceited Jests of George Peele, Gentleman (1607), but from the case of The Puritan alone it is clear that material in that collection was available before 1607. An earlier edition may have perished ; yet A Mad World need not be relying on the Jests at all, but on their sources.

R.H. Lane[54] in his edition of the play settles for a date "very early 1606," but his arguments

49. Elizabethan Stage, III, 440.
50. The Works of Nicholas Breton, ed. Ursula Kentish-Wright (London, 1929), I, 109.
51. Here are some of them : Willis W. Pratt (Cornell, 1931) ; G.J. Eberle (Wisconsin, 1944) ; R. H. Lane (George Washington, 1946) ; M.J. Taylor, A Critical Old-Spelling Edition of Thomas Middleton's "A Mad World, My Masters" (1608), and an Annotated Bibliography of Thomas Middleton, 1940-61, unpublished University of Birmingham dissertation (1963).
52. Edition, pp.xxxii-xl ; in Kentish-Wright's edition of Breton, see I, 117, 120, 125.
53. See John Tucker Murray, English Dramatic Companies 1558-1647 (London, 1910), I, 353.
54. A Critical Edition of "A Mad World, My Masters," unpublished George Washington University dissertation (1946), p.15.

are of a curiously obscure character, and rest partly on identifications made between Catholic nobility and fictional characters such as Lord Owemuch, an alias of Follywit. Standish Henning[55] reviews the meagre evidence briefly and, on the basis of the minting of spur-royals, opts for "after July, 1606" as the date of original composition. 1606, then, is about the right date for this comedy.

In all the editions in typescript I have mentioned, the survey of sources amounts to very little. Henning did not even include a survey of sources. The first thing to notice are the numerous echoes of Shakespeare throughout the play ; there is a particularising detail of material objects, detail which reflects bourgeois taste, an allusiveness frequent in Shakespeare :

> the curtains, indeed, were wrought in Venice, with the story of the Prodigal Child in silk and gold ; only the swine are left out, my lord, for spoiling the curtains.
>
> (II.i.5-8)

The Host of the Garter Inn in The Merry Wives of Windsor (1602) refers to Sir John's bed curtains as being "painted about with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new" (IV.v.7-8). Middleton's version is more satirical at the expense of middle-class taste, yet it has something of that whimsical humour which is Shakespeare's method of depicting idiosyncratic people. Middleton also makes Follywit lament his worldly weakness after the manner of Falstaff ; in fact his speech at I.i.13-24 is directly lifted from Henry IV, Part I, III.iii.14-21. R.H. Lane[56] lists a number of other, smaller, parallels with Shakespeare's plays to 1605, but later admits they are superficial.

Comparison with The Merry Wives of Windsor is helpful in determining how far Middleton had advanced over his narrow preoccupation with the guilt of sexual transgression. In both The Merry Wives and A Mad World the London rogues leave town to practise their tricks in the country by

55. A Mad World, My Masters, ed. Standish Henning (London, 1965), pp.ix-x.
56. Edition, pp. 18, 32.

living off others ; jealousy and stupidity are ridiculed in Master Ford and Doctor Caius, but only Falstaff amongst the morally defective is actually punished. Shakespeare lets Mistress Quickly off, for example ; Middleton, for the first time, does not try so hard to impose a scheme of justice on the wrongdoers. When, however, he has depicted successful adultery in the subplot concerning Penitent Brothel and Mrs. Harebrain, wife of the jealous Harebrain, he feels constrained to bring in infernal retribution in the shape of a fantastic, diabolical spirit. If Shakespeare had actually allowed adultery to take place between Falstaff and Mrs. Ford, he certainly would not have counted this transgression as any worse than Falstaff's thieving or lying. Middleton can treat the robberies of Follywit with a light-hearted touch, but the adultery of Penitent Brothel is handled with a seriousness which splits the comedy's unity down the middle.

The two plots run side by side until act four, when the subplot ends with a compromise which is intended to restore propriety. In the main plot Follywit plays three tricks[57] on his grandfather, Sir Bounteous Progress, who is very wealthy but intends to keep his wealth to himself until he dies. During the second trick, in which Follywit dresses as his grandfather's courtesan—later Follywit's wife—to gain entry to a chamber containing valuables, he makes an assignation with Gumwater, the chief servingman of the Bounteous household ; as a token he takes Gumwater's gold chain (IV.iii.21-28) ; M.J. Taylor[58] compares this with the capture of the Country Gentleman's gold chain in The Thirde and last Part of Conny-catching (1592),[59] but I cannot see the faintest similarity between the two cozenages. Follywit's third trick is to disguise himself and his men as a band of players, Owemuch's men, and to offer to put on a play at Sir Bounteous' festive celebration (V.i.-V.ii.). The play is called, ominously, The Slip, and Owemuch's men are successful in

57. Follywit's first trick, that of tying up Sir Bounteous, robbing him and then tying up himself and his own men, finds a partial parallel in jest no. 7 of Dobsons Drie Bobbes (1607) ; but this collection is too late.
58. Edition, p.xxxvii.
59. Grosart's Greene, X, 175-182.

selling the idea of a performance to Sir Bounteous (V.i.70-80). For various roles, Follywit borrows certain properties of his patron—a chain, a jewel and a watch (for Time), and prepares horses for his men to escape. The men depart while Follywit remains behind to speak the Prologue :

> The play which we present no fault shall meet
> But one ; you'll say 'tis short, we'll say 'tis sweet.
>
> (IV.ii.23-24)

Middleton adds some hilarious complications to this trick, but thus far he is indebted to one of The Merrie Conceited Jests of George Peele. Gentleman (1607) : the sixth jest, "The Iest of George Peele at Bristow." This trick is also recounted in Mery Tales, Wittie Questions and Quicke Answeres (1567),[60] no. cxxxiii, "How a mery man deuised to cal people to a playe." The place is Aldersgate, and the trick depends on the use of a hall, but there is no borrowing of properties. On 6 November 1602, Richard Vennar played the same trick on London playgoers with his nonexistent England's Joy at the Swan.[61] Finally, Pasquils Iestes (1604) has a version entitled "Of mad conceited Bulkin," which revolves around a mountebank who was supposed to dispense remedies and to prophesy. This jest has removed to Sittingborne. The George Peele recounting is actually the closest, but the cited versions indicate that the joke was current during the early years of the seventeenth century.

George's jest-biographer tells us how George pretended he was putting on a dramatic performance at Bristol, when in fact all he intended to do was deliver a prologue and depart with the admission receipts. George "goes directly to the Maior, tels him he was a Scholler and a Gentleman, and

60. I have used the version in Shakespeare Jest-Books, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt (London, 1864), I, 145-147.
61. Details in J.Q. Adams, Shakespearean Playhouses (Boston and New York, 1917), pp.177-178.

that he had a certaine Historie of the Knight of the Rodes ; ... The Maior agreed to it, gaue him leaue, and withall appointed him a place ... and very liberally gaue him an Angell." Thus George collected an angel, plus forty shillings admission fees, and borrowed some players' cloaks to lend colour to his scheme—having beforehand prepared a horse for swift departure. He comes on stage dressed as a player, bows to the spectators, and delivers a Prologue :

> A trifling Toy, a Iest of no account, pardie.
> ... Sit still awhile, Ile send the Actors to ye.
> Which being said, ... downe stayres goes he, gets to his Horse, and so with fortie shillings to London.

George escapes, but Follywit's men are caught by the Constable and brought back ; their captor, however, is forced into the impromptu action and tied up, and all re-escape ; with typical Middletonian effrontery, they return as themselves, but are discovered when the alarm-watch goes off in Time's pocket. The whole scene of the impromptu comedy is a delightful example of Middleton's wit and humour, for which he needed no source.

The plot concerning the Harebrains and Penitent Brothel has not yet been traced to a definite source. The outline of the tale—the cuckolding of a jealous husband by a crafty wife under the guise of piety—seems a common enough theme, and may be traceable to an Italian novella. Apuleius' Golden Asse, which was translated by William Adlington in 1566, has a tale giving the initial situation as Middleton has it : the wife of Barbarus has a lover called Philesiterus, but although she acts as chastely as she can, she cannot ward off her husband's suspicions (book IX, chapter 41). Robert Greene has a similar threesome, together with adultery under the guise of virtue, in a tale called "A pleasant discourse, how a wise wanton by her husbands gentle warning, became to be a modest Matron," in A Disputation Betweene a Hee Conny-catcher, and a Shee Conny-catcher (1592).[62]

62. Grosart's Greene, X, 256-266

The husband and the seducer of the lady are good friends, and it takes some time to persuade the husband that he is being cuckolded. Harebrain, on the other hand, is as jealous as Shakespeare's Ford, and is convinced from the outset that his wife is unfaithful. He never discovers any evidence, however, even though he eavesdrops at his wife's chamber door like the husband in Greene's tale. The end of the irregular affair comes about when Penitent Brothel is assailed by a terrifying hallucination, just as he has come to think that "Adultery / Draws the divorce 'twixt heaven and the soul" (IV.i.1-2). Although perhaps not strictly within the province of a source-study, the origin of this succubus—which Reginald Scot[63] defined as "the diuell, in likenes of a prettie wench, [a] prostitute"—is of some interest. Middleton was familiar with Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, before it was printed in 1604 :

> [Prigbeard] had a head of hair like one of my devils in Doctor Faustus, when the old Theatre cracked and frighted the audience.
> (The Black Book, VIII, 13)

In the play, Faustus requests Mephistophilus to fetch him a wife, as he feels wanton and lascivious (scene V, l.588), and Mephistophilus returns "with a diuell drest like a woman, with fier workes.." No doubt the thrill of horror which this crackling, fiery figure aroused made a deep impression on the young Middleton, and later, when he considered King James' interest in demonology, he must have decided to put his own concupiscent female spirit on the stage. The sin of congress with the soulless is "demoniality," and Sir Walter Greg[64] points out that "with Faustus' union with Helen the nice balance between possible salvation and imminent damnation is upset." Penitent Brothel's visiting succubus, which is the perfect image of Mrs. Harebrain, is a

63. The Discouerie of Witchcraft (1584), book IV, chapter III.
64. "The Damnation of Faustus," MLR, XLI (1946), 107.

reflection of the repentant sinner's hidden desires ; in the midst of renunciation, he has conjured the very vision he sought to lay—a fairly common experience in prayer and confession. Now he is tested ; the nightmare vision tempts him and taunts him, and finally leaves him in a state of shock. Later, Penitent Brothel finds that his mistress, Mrs. Harebrain, was just at the same time imagining where she would like to be : "What shall become of me ? my own thoughts doom me" (IV.iv.45). Her lover replies that, if she is honest, the devil will have no power to assume her shape. King James in his Daemonologie (1603), book III, chapter III, goes so far as to say that a body thus usurped must be a dead one : "The other meane is, when he ["the Devil] borrowes a dead body and so visibly [appears], and as it seemes vnto them naturally as a man conuerses with them" (p.66). Of course, he was willing to allow that "the imaginar[y] rauishing of the spirite foorth of the body" may be an illusion practised by the Devil on the fantasy, the "senses being dulled, and as it were a sleepe" (p.73). King James' version of a succubus' origin does not seem to be followed here, though doubtless Middlcton was making a bow in the King's direction when he invented the episode. He may have been following an account in Reginald Scot's Discouerie of Witchcraft (1584), book XVI, chapter 10, pp.282-283—he certainly borrowed from Scot later—about the effect of desire on the imagination.[65] John Marston devotes act IV of Sophonisba (1606) to representing Erichtho's assumption of Sophonisba's form, and to Syphax's seduction by the incubus thus summoned. Still, Faustus' Helen is undoubtedly the dramatic prototype of Middleton's Mrs. Harebrain in the guise of a spirit.

The moral of the sub-plot is rather hard to find after the visitation of the succubus. Penitent Brothel concludes in favour of marital

65. Compare also R.H. West, The Invisible World (Athens, Georgia, 1939), p.84 : "the incubus, like the evil genius, acted against those whose weakness and sinfulness invited it to confirm their downfall."

fidelity, urging that a woman married and faithful to one man is "part a virgin" (IV.iv.73) ; which somewhat unfortunately proves Mrs. Harebrain a whore. Still, since Harebrain never learns the truth, he is encouraged to trust Penitent Brothel implicitly. The unifying link between the two plots is provided by repentance ; in the main plot the courtesan Frank Gullman, after her marriage to Follywit, also resolves to leave off fornication and adultery. And in addition, both Harebrain and Follywit, for all their guile, are taken in by mere façades of virtue, although Harebrain is too foolish to illustrate the irony of his deception very effectively. In the main plot, the irony of the tricker tricked is superb and no moral compromise is involved at the end when we find that the intellectual wit of Follywit does not extend to ethical discernment. Frank Gullman and Mrs. Harebrain are two more of Middleton's studies in the type of dominant, experienced woman, who exercises a deft control over her young suitor : Follywit actually believed that his beloved was "as she was made at first ; simple of herself, without sophistication" (IV.iii.114). Actually he had already played her rôle as courtesan, had he but known it. Standish Henning[66] contends that "artistic confusion results from moral uncertainty" in the play ; Middleton is so fascinated with the humour of his hero's tricks and the astuteness of his worldly women that the only person who goes through a reforming experience is a sexual transgressor. For the rest, reform is much less painful, and much less convincing.

SOURCES

Main plot : Episode from the jest tradition : ? The Merrie Conceited Jests of George Peele, Gentleman (1607).

Subplot : ? Hints from Robert Greene, A Disputation Betweene a Hee Conny-catcher, and a Shee Conny-catcher (1592) ; Reginald Scot, The Discouerie of Witchcraft (1584) ; Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus (1604).

66. Edition, p.xii.

Probably the last play in this group of comedies for Paul's boys, A Trick to Catch the Old One (Q1 dated 1608), is really an excellent play, as Gerard Langbaine[67] early noted. Charles Gilden[68] said that "in those Times" it was "accounted a good Play." Commercially at least it was a great success: it was issued twice in 1608/9 and played at Court before James on 1 January 1609 by the children of Blackfriars. Robert Keysar was probably responsible for the fact that the play appeared both at Paul's and Blackfriars. In 1608-09 the Blackfriars and Whitefriars companies associated in the raising of twenty pounds per annum to pay the Paul's boys to remain closed down, and Keysar, who was in control of the Blackfriars children, probably negotiated for the comedy's transfer while he was about the other business.[69]

A Trick to Catch the Old One is a paradoxical play, for despite its early success and subsequent eclipse, it is much less of its time than any comedy Middleton wrote for the boys. Indeed, Daniel Dodson found "not one reliable shred of internal evidence to establish a date of composition,"[70] perhaps because Middleton deliberately eschewed topical reference. Acquisition of cash and property are balanced against the sexual drive, and most of the characters fail to achieve any equilibrium. The different methods which the various characters employ to have their own share and someone else's all cut across the same centre, the main theme of the play—the nature of financial success. Middleton explores the effects of money's influence on friendship and love in some detail.

I am inclined to relate this play to the Greek New Comedy tradition, and to attribute some of its singleness of effect to this model.

67. An Account of the English Dramatick Poets (1691), p.373.
68. The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets (1699), p.99.
69. E.K. Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 22 and III, 439. The Court performance on 1 January receives a different year in J.T. Murray's English Dramatic Companies, I, 353.
70. Middleton's City Comedies, p.108.

The main plot has something in common with a Plautine comedy, and several characters are very like those in the Latin manner. The witty plotter, the usurer and the courtesan are all typical of Plautine comedy, and in 1951 Signi Falk[71] indicated which of Plautus' comedies was most relevant to Middleton's play. Fabula palliata, Latin comedy derived from Greek New Comedy, had in it "the senex, or aged lover ; the matrona, or housewife ; the servus, who ... assists his master in trickery ; the adolescens, or youthful lover ; and the virgo, or young girl ... The virgo never appears on the stage."[72] To parallel these, Middleton has Hoard, Mrs. Lucre, the Host, Witgood and Joyce, a virgo who actually makes a small appearance by virtue of seventeen lines in three scenes.

The nature of the play's indebtedness to Plautus' Persa does not make a convincing demonstration possible ; Miss Falk admits that really only three scenes are materially affected by the influence of Plautus' play. It was available in sixteenth-century Continental editions (there was one which contained twenty Plautine comedies published at Lyons in 1587), and Charles Hoole[73] mentions that Plautus was acted in schools to give boys experience in the use of elegant Latin. An English translation[74] perhaps appeared in 1631. Plautus' plot runs as follows : Toxilus, a witty slave, decides that he needs cash to buy Lemniselenis' freedom, a courtesan with whom he is in love. She works for the pimp Dordalus. From Sagaristio, a friend of his, he borrows money and buys the girl ; then he has his parasite Saturio's daughter dressed up to resemble a rich foreign girl who is to be sold into slavery. Dordalus buys her, a sale from which Toxilus

71. "Plautus' Persa and Middleton's A Trick to Catch the Old One," MLN, LXVI (1951), 19-21.
72. Quoted from the introduction to Machiavelli's Clizia, ed. Oliver Evans (Great Neck, New York, 1962), p.6.
73. A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching School, ed. Thiselton Mark (Syracuse, New York, 1913), p.315.
74. See Henrietta R. Palmer, List of English editions and translations of Greek and Latin classics printed before 1641 (London, 1911), p.86.

and Saturio draw a handsome profit, and then Saturio demands her return since she is a free-born girl. At the end a feast takes place during which the unfortunate Dordalus is baited and maltreated. The most relevant episodes are those in which Sagaristio publicizes the foreign girl's financial potential as well as her personal qualities ; in which Dordalus takes the word of the girl's promoter without evidence ; and in which Saturio's daughter acts the part of a rich heiress and gives equivocal answers which are not quite lies.

Plautus' Persa accounts, somewhat distantly, for the scheme in I.ii. of Middleton's play in which the Host is brought in, like Sagaristio, to act as agent, since Witgood, like Toxilus, is too well-known to act for himself. The Host is under the financial necessity of cooperating because it is his best way of reclaiming credit Witgood has had at his tavern, although he is never told that Widow Medler (the Courtesan's assumed name and status) is a fraud. Sagaristio, on the other hand, cooperates because Toxilus is speculating with his cash ; not until later, however, is he told about the scheme of introducing Saturio's daughter as a Persian girl. III.i. is also attributable to the Latin play, a scene in which the Courtesan tells the truth about her true station in life as Saturio's daughter in Persa does (scene iv, l.642).[75] An odd feature of Plautus' sense of propriety in this play is that the virgo, Saturio's daughter, is required to act falsely (she has scruples about it, as Middleton's Courtesan has), whereas Lemniselenis, a courtesan, is the prize Toxilus strives for and wins. Middleton madd his Courtesan the dissembler in accordance with her fallen nature, and Joyce, the virgo, the prize for Witgood. Hoard pays handsomely for his purchased bride, the Courtesan, because Witgood claims a pre-contract and has to be bought off. In each case, neither Lucre nor Dordalus investigates the "well-born" woman's credentials before paying for her, but accepts the facts on the evidence of a

75. References to Persa are from Plautus, trans. Paul Nixon (London, 1916-32), III, 417-523.

flimsy attestation—a parchment with Staffordshire and names in it is enough for Lucre (II.i.35), a letter from Persia sufficient for Dordalus (sc. iii, ll.520-527).

In altering Plautus' sense of propriety, Middleton left himself with an insoluble problem. Toxilus, since he aspires only to a courtesan's love, need not undergo a change of character before the final feast at which he celebrates his success. He has lied and cheated, but not whored his way through, and so we leave him at the end. Witgood has lied, cheated and whored his way through the intrigue, yet he still wins the play's most socially and morally desirable reward, a handsome virgin with a thousand-pound portion. Surely, we say, "wit" (meaning "craft," "ingenuity," as in the names Follywit, Allwit and Witgood), cannot alone carry off the spoils of victory, since Middleton seems always to use the term equivocally, as something not quite equal to a virtue.

To finish his play, Middleton had to have a scene showing the repentances of Witgood (to bring him up to the standard of his innocent bride), and of the Courtesan, who has cheated and robbed her husband, to prepare her for love and obedience to the old man. The pair forswear their promiscuity on their knees after the manner of the final Palinode in Jonson's Cynthia's Revels (1600), in tetrametric verse :

> . . . . . .
> Stabbing of arms for a common mistress ;
> Riband favours, ribald speeches ;
> Dear perfum'd jackets, pennyless breeches ;
> Dutch flapdragons, healths in urine ;
> Drabs that keep a man too sure in :
> I do defy you all.
>
> (V.ii.198-203)

Middleton is openly copying from Amorphus' speech in Jonson's play, as Dyce noted :

> From stabbing of armes, flap-dragons, healths, whiffes, and all such swaggering humours.... Good MERCVRY defend vs.
>
> (Palinode, ll.7-9)[76]

76. Quotation from Ben Jonson, ed. Herford and Simpson (Oxford, 1932), IV; 181.

The Courtesan forswears waving of fans, sinful glances and secret friends after the example of Jonson's Phantaste, none of which things she has committed in the play. She also forswears adultery which may result in a child being fathered by another man, about the one sin she and Witgood have not committed. The vices, also, that Witgood forswears, he has not indulged in during the play. It seems to me the borrowing is deliberately intended as a patently facile device to obviate the need for any real sense of retribution which overtakes the witty sinners. Witgood has, in fact, thrown off his immature foibles when we first meet him (I.i.30-35), and intends at the close to hang on to the gains of his ingenious deceptions. The ending from Jonson is incorporated without proper dovetailing because Middleton wanted, it seems, a deliberately perfunctory and irrelevant finale. It reminds one of the implausible devices which Marston uses to achieve certain effects.

The ability of a widow, whether in fact rich or not, to attract greedy suitors, was typical jest-book material. The early confidence-trickster Widow Edyth was such a character, who collected a number of jests around her : Twelue mery gestys of one called Edyth, the lyeing wydow whyche still lyueth (1525, 1573), apparently compiled by a victim, Walter Smith.[77] Sometimes Edyth used her daughter as decoy to deceive a gentleman into thinking she was heiress to fair lands and great wealth (jests VII, VIII, XI and XII). The Courtesan, however, is not really a widow at all, though there is a real widow in the play : this is Mrs. Lucre, who has actually just been remarried, to Lucre, but has a grown boy by her first husband, called Sam Freedom. At the end of II.i., Mrs. Lucre has the task of escorting the Courtesan around the home of Witgood's uncle, to impress her with Witgood's solid financial backing. It crosses her mind that Sam, her son, is wooing in the wrong direction in wooing Joyce, Hoard's niece, and ought to have this young widow himself. After all, he has two hundred pounds a year and is "a proper person and

77. Reprinted in Shakespeare Jest-Books, ed. Hazlitt, III, 28-108.

a lovely" ; in fact, she reflects, if she had not married old Lucre, she "could find in my heart to have thee myself, son ; ay, from 'em all" (II.i.393-394). Middleton's audience doubtless found this scandalous suggestion of incest funny, but there is no mistaking the relish with which he sketches the situation. It is only a minor motif in this play, compared with the similar situation in Michaelmas Term concerning Easy, Thomasine and Quomodo, yet he cannot omit it.

The comedy has a subplot concerning one Dampit, an alcoholic usurer.[78] His greed for money has actually become a disease which is killing him. Thomas Tymme in 1592 called covetousness "a leprous dropsie, the nature of which disease is such, that the more a man is puft up with that corrupt humor, the more deadly thirst he hath!"[79] Dampit has contracted dropsy and is consumed with a burning sensation, the curse of a covetous man which Flaminius in Timon of Athens wishes on Lucullus. The moralist Thomas Wilson in his Discovrse vpon vsurie (1584) uses the story of Croesus to illustrate the burning thirst the usurer suffers in hell (Fol.66-66v). Dampit, in fact, as his name and the allusion to the dragon sealed in the abyss, from Revelation, makes clear (IV.v.7-8), is in a hell of his own making.[80] Witgood's "Trick," then, which does not affect Dampit, exercises a humanising influence on the usurers of the main plot. In reading the play in this way, we can to some extent justify

78. Richard Levin has an article entitled "The Dampit Scenes in A Trick to Catch the Old One, MLQ, XXV (1964), 140-152, in which he argues that Dampit is an "emotional lightning rod" designed to draw away the audience's hatred of usury from Hoard and Lucre. Dampit, he holds, illustrates a Hogarthian "Usurer's Progress."
79. This quotation and the following ones are taken from Celeste T. Wright, "The Usurer in Elizabethan Literature," SP, XXXI (1934), 179-180.
80. Miss J.R. Sargent has this interpretation too : Moral and Social Bases, pp.161-165.

Middleton's allowing Witgood, after due penance, to carry off the best reward of its corrupt society.

A Trick to Catch the Old One explores the kind of human relations possible in a society bound together by money. Land and financial security assume the place of virtues, but they prove to be more illusory than a courtesan's good faith or a creditor's illwill. The fact that a Witgood is the most deserving character in this play's society makes absolute virtue quite foreign to it. There is no doubt that, despite the hilarity, Middleton's comic vision had darkened in the course of writing these four plays. In Your Five Gallants, the young man who wins the chaste bride is himself chaste and reformist in outlook ; in Michaelmas Term, the simplicity and innocence of the young man are not quite sufficient to win financial success without the help of an older woman, who therefore merits him in marriage ; in A Mad World, the young man is not so innocent, and although he redeems his estate and nets a handsome profit, he wins only the hand of a courtesan ; in A Trick, the earlier ethical pattern is entirely reversed when a quite unscrupulous young man takes the desirable girl and the financial reward as well. The type of sources Middleton depended on clearly relate to the moral atmosphere of his comedies. Your Five Gallants has a number of avowedly moral writers amongst its quarries—Greene, for example, as A Mad World does. Michaelmas Term relies on Greene a good deal too, but A Trick does not. The world of Plautine comedy is realistic, lively and amusing, but it is not powerfully moralistic or Christian. After writing these comedies, Middleton began to turn to different and frequently more remote sources, as we shall see.

SOURCES

Main plot : Maccius Plautus, Persa (before 184 B.C.) ; Ben Jonson, Cynthia's Revels (1600) ; jests concerning a cheating widow, possibly in Walter Smith, Twelue mery gestys (1573).

Minor action : Unknown ; ?portrait of an usurer based on traditional prejudice.

CHAPTER FOUR

High Comedy and Tragi-comedy

About 1608, Middleton's productive connection with the children's theatres ended. The closing of Paul's boys indicates the end of one of those vogues which, when they have died, seem incomprehensible to later tastes. Middleton was out on his own again. What more natural than to turn to his old friend, Thomas Dekker, and offer to collaborate on a play designed for the adult theatre ?

The play they wrote together, The Roaring Girl, dramatises the career of the London virago, Moll Frith (born about 1584, died in Fleet Street, 1659). It was put on at the Fortune theatre by Prince Henry's men, the Henslowe company, almost certainly through Dekker's connection with Henslowe. Fredson Bowers[1] suggested that although three compositors set the 1611 quarto, the accidentals do not indicate distinctive characteristics : hence a uniform text probably underlay the setting. This manuscript text may have been a transcript or fair copy of the two authors' foul papers, written for the sale of the play to Henslowe. Bowers believes that Dekker made such a fair copy, and that "in transcribing Middleton's papers it would be quite possible for Dekker to have made minor alterations for dramatic interest and to have tidied up any loose ends" (p.8). The evidence for Dekker's copying is based on spellings which can be compared with his hand in the More fragment, and on the lack of Middleton spellings. Neither man was affluent enough, I should think, to have employed a scribe.

Scholars have disagreed about Middleton's share in The Roaring Girl. Miss M.L. Hunt,[2] who makes it plain that she thinks Middleton was a baleful influence on Dekker, was inclined to give all the Moll Cutpurse scenes to Dekker. "It

1. The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker (Cambridge, 1958), III, 3-9.
2. Thomas Dekker : A Study (New York, 1911), p.110.

would seem," she theorizes,[3] "that in 1610 Middleton and Dekker planned to collaborate on a play that should utilize the public interest in an unusual character, giving to the subject a kindly interpretation and incorporating in it a slight romantic comedy of Dekker's creation and an intrigue subplot of Middleton's." She expanded this division to give the canting scenes as well as the romantic lovers to Dekker, and left Middleton with the material concerning the worldly citizens. Even so, Moll traffics with the citizen world in II.i. Most scholars, however, have ascribed more of the Moll scenes to Middleton than this. T.S. Eliot,[4] in 1927, made an impressionistic statement that subsequent scholarship has affirmed : "Dekker is all sentiment ... the feeling about Moll Cut-Purse of The Roaring Girl is Middleton's rather than anybody's." His great admiration, qualified as it is, for the play's vigour, is at first sight something of a mystery ; but the conception of the figure herself and her ennoblement from the original is indeed a triumph. George R. Price[5] concluded that "Except for the canting scene (a negligible dramatic contribution), Dekker has almost nothing to do with the depiction of Moll" (p.613) and that Middleton "should be credited with the most memorable character in this drama, Moll Cutpurse" (p.615). He gives to Middleton I.ii. (with touches of Dekker); I.iii. (likewise) ; II.i., ii. ; III.i., ii. ; IV.i. ; V.ii. Barker prefers to have Middleton share most of this with Dekker, giving Middleton only IV.i. and V.ii. to himself. Barker may have known what direction Bowers' textual study was taking, since both scholars' books appeared in 1958. If Dekker copied Middleton's papers, it is extremely likely that he took the opportunity to touch up Middleton's scenes.

For the purposes of the present discussion I am conflating the views of Price and Barker, to give a working division of the play as follows : with Barker, I give act I to Dekker ;

3. Thomas Dekker, p.113.
4. Selected Essays 1917-1932 (New York, 1932), p.167.
5. "The Shares of Middleton and Dekker in a Collaborated Play," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters, XXX (1944), 601-615.

II.i. to Middleton, although after Moll's entrance there may well be some Dekker, as Barker says—if so, mere touches ; II.ii. to Middleton—indeed, a scene which seems to me his par excellence ; III.i. to Middleton, with Price ; III.ii. is shared, probably, a view Barker agrees with, and, pace Miss Hunt, this is a citizen scene ; III.iii. to Dekker, with Barker ; IV.i. to Middleton, with Barker, Price and all critics ; IV.ii. and V.i. to Dekker, with Barker and Price ; and V.ii. to Middleton, with Barker and Price. By accepting that Middleton's work is contained in II.i.,ii.; III.i.,ii.; IV.i. and V.ii., about half the play, it becomes necessary to investigate the sources both for Moll and the worldly citizens' intrigues, but it leaves Sir Alexander Wengrave and his fellow peers largely with Dekker.

Mary Markham, alias Frith, alias Thrift, alias "Malcutpurse",[6] was born about 1584 and died in 1659. Since the quarto of The Roaring Girl was published in 1611, no more than about the first twenty-five years of her life are of any interest at present. R.C. Bald[7] maintains that the play was written in 1607 or 1608, and in view of the close identity in phrase and tone between V.i. of The Roaring Girl and The Belman of London (1608), it is preferable to put it in the latter year. Here, for example, is a passage from V.i. of The Roaring Girl :

> Trapdoor. My doxy ? I have, by the salomon, a doxy that carries a kinchin mort in her slate at her back, besides my dell and my dainty wild dell, with all whom I'll tumble this next dark-mans in the strommel, and drink ben bouse, and eat a fat gruntling cheat, a cackling cheat, and a quacking cheat.
>
> (V.i.165-170)

6. For an interesting lawsuit concerning her, see M. Dowling, "A Note on Moll Cutpurse—'The Roaring Girl'," RES, X (1934), 67-71.
7. "The Chronology of Middleton's Plays," MLR, XXXII (1937), 37-38.

Compare The Belman[8] :

> Of which the Yong-ones and the Least, are called Kinching Morts, and those are girles of a yeare or two old, which the Morts (their mothers) carry at their backes in their Slates (which in the Canting Tongue are Sheetes) : ... The second bird of this fether is a Dell, and that is a yong wench, ripe for the Act of generation, but as yet not spoyled of her maidenhead ... Of these Dells, some are termed Wilde Dells.... wheresoeuer an Vpright-man is in presence, the Doxye is onely at his command : These Doxyes will for good victuals or a small peice of money, prostitute there bodies to seruingmen ... & to ploughmē in barnes, haylofts or stables.

There is a tedious deal more of this material in the scene which can be paralleled in the pamphlet. The year 1608 is probably correct for a further reason : in the Epilogue to the play Dekker alludes to a book "foul as his brains they flow'd from ... full of lies." D.B. Dodson[9] believes this was a pamphlet by S.R. (Samuel Rid ?) which attacked The Belman for being incompetent and ill-informed. Before Lanthorne and Candlelight could put Martin Mark-all properly in his place as vainglorious, Dekker probably took the opportunity to slip in a quick punch in The Roaring Girl.

Thus it is clear we should think of a twenty-three-year-old Moll at the date of writing ; but even at that age, she was neither handsome nor honest, and the dramatists tell us explicit-

8. Quotation from The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. A.B. Grosart (London and Aylesbury, 1884-86), III, 106-107.
9. Middleton's City Comedies, pp.118-120. The Dekker-S.R. quarrel ran as follows : Belman (1608) ; "an usurper who will be taken for Beadle of Bridewell" ; Lanthorne and Candlelight (1609) ; Martin Mark-all's Defence and Answer to the Belman (1610).... .....

ly that they are idealizing her character. Middleton, in writing to the readers, speaks of leaving things better than he finds them, and in the Prologue discusses various kinds of depraved Roaring Girls ; but he affirms that his and Dekker's Roaring Girl flies with more lofty wings. Dekker, in the Epilogue, defends himself against disapproval for treating so light a creature.

The play was put on at the Fortune by Prince Henry's men, the Henslowe company. In the repertory of the Prince's men was a play called Long Meg of Westminster, an old play dating from 1594 or 1595, which was still drawing enough people in 1611 to merit a mention from a rival company. The play has not survived, but its source, a short jest-biography of 1582, is extant in chap-book editions and a text published in 1620. We have therefore a good idea of what the play contained, and it seems on the face of it likely that Middleton and Dekker went to this piece for inspiration. Long Meg was an interesting virago, not quite so markedly hermaphrodite as Moll Frith ; she flourished in the early part of the sixteenth century and may have lived till 1560. The indulgent treatment accorded to her in the jest-biography, which follows the Robin Hood tradition of robbing the rich to help the poor, is precisely the tone of The Roaring Girl. As I hope to show, there are details in the play which correspond with points in the jest-biography, but not with the biography of Moll Frith. For instance, Meg slightly preferred women's attire, but Moll never liked any but men's apparel ; and in the play we see Moll appear several times as a girl.

Moll's career is traced in two documents, The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith (1662) (an anonymous book purporting to be by Moll, but passing from a third-person introduction to a first-person diary without change of style) ; and in an extract from The Consistory of London Correction Book (1605-1606).[10] Controls fortunately exist against which to check the flavour and accuracy of the 1662 Life : namely a letter of John Chamberlain reporting Moll's mock-penitence

10. See E.K. Chambers, "Elizabethan Stage Gleanings," RES, I (1925), 78.

in 1611, and the court-case of 1621 transcribed by Margaret Dowling. Both give reports of Moll which tally with the 1662 Life, so that hereafter it will be treated as factual enough compared with the stage Moll. The fact that John Chamberlain describes an incident found in the Life also gives an approximate limit to the amount of the biography relevant to the play. The narrative contains about three dates in all, and the birth date is known to be inaccurate. On p.69 of the Life we read how Moll did "penance in a White Sheet at Paul's Cross during Sunday Morning Sermon", so that if all the material is in chronological order, incidents up to within about six pages of this point are relevant. After this point, indeed, a reader finds little to compare with the play ; a few details only, such as that Moll resented being called Mal Cutpurse (p.84), as in the play (V.i.365-370), that she was a successful backsword fighter (pp.87-88), that she associated with prostitutes (denied in the play), and that she was well aware of married women's private desires (p.118). This last piece of information perhaps prompted the dramatists to associate Moll with a citizen plot when they wrote.

With the narrative up to p.45, there is plenty of contact between the two writings. On p.19 the origin of her reputation with the dramatists is suggested : she was honest, we learn, because "She was not wooed nor sollicited by any man." (Indeed, it seems possible that she did not undergo a normal period of puberty.) This means that the dramatists were responsible for rendering her attractive to men like Laxton, for plot purposes ; for not only had Moll determined to remain single (p.22), but she also had a very masculine appearance :

> At this Age we spake of before, she was not much taxed with any Looseness or Debauchery in that kind ; whether the virility and manliness of her face and aspect took of any mans desires that way (which may be very rational and probable) or that besides her uncomplyable and rougher temper of body and mind also, which in the female Sex is usually persuasive and winning ... she her self also from the more importunate

> and prevailing sway of her inclinations, which were masculine and robust, could not intend those venereal impurities, and pleasures.
> (Life, p.14)

Moll constantly wore male dress ; the reason we are given is that, since she was not made for man's pleasure, she decided to get a measure of satisfaction by wearing men's hose and doublet (p.18). In the play, she makes her first entrance in female dress, and a final one as a bride ; otherwise she always enters dressed as a man. Moll also enjoyed smoking, and she had an unlucky experience in a grocer's shop where she sent for a pipe (p.42). The dramatists knew of this habit, for in II.i. Moll encounters the worldly citizens in an apothecary's shop where she takes a pipe of tobacco. Laxton thus sees her and determines to pursue her.

Also, the origins of the world's judgment on Moll is given in these pages, in details certain of which the dramatists transformed into foibles or acceptable parts of Moll's broadminded outlook. She enjoyed a bout at cudgels (p.6), she could beat men into compliance (p.21), she had lived and worked amongst pickpockets and receivers, whom she quitted when it became too dangerous (p.24). The objects she particularly liked to handle were jewels, rings and watches (p.43), something Middleton perhaps had in mind when, in IV.i., he had her tempted with a jewelled ruff-band, a golden chain and a German watch. In the play, however, she merely admires them and leaves well alone.

Some small details seem to have found their way into the play without allusion to Moll : there is a reference to an attempt to make her into a colonist's wife in Virginia (p.30), which appears as a quip at II.ii.71-72 ; and the Life mentions that Moll's criminality was attested by the branding in the hand. Moll was interviewed by a pickpocket organisation for the post of receiver (p.35), and she was accepted only after she held up her hands "to see whether I had not been manumitted at Sessions." The text does not make clear whether evidence of genuine criminality or ability to escape conviction was being sought. Dekker transfers this mark of opprobrium to Trapdoor, who is likewise tested by

Sir Alexander Wengrave :

> Sir Alexander. ... hold thy hand up. What's this ? is't burnt ?
> Trapdoor. No, sir, no ; a little singed with making fireworks.
> (I.i.332-335)

Trapdoor seems to be the invention of the dramatists; he is set to catch Moll and convict her of theft. Doubtless he embodies examples of the various devices used to incriminate or remove Moll from time to time.

The Consistory of London Correction Book (1605-6) supplies one important detail the Life does not have : it tells of Moll's ability to play the lute, which she did on the Fortune stage in 1605. Upon this musical ability depends a whole scene, IV.i., in which Moll, pretending to be disguised as a music-master, plays her viol da gamba. On that same occasion at the Fortune, she denied she had been "dishonest of her body", or acted as a bawd. This may have been the reason why the dramatists decided to make her into a heroine. If so, they ignored a great deal of faults, for a special purpose now to be suggested.

The explanation perhaps lies with the shadowy figure of Long Meg of Westminster, a woman that some scholars deny ever to have existed.11 Jack Dapper thus questions the source of Moll's altruistic protection of him from the Counter Prison : "was it your Meg of Westminster's courage that rescued me from the Poultry puttocks indeed ?" (V.i.2-4), suggesting that her action was characteristic of the earlier romantic girl. In the eighteen chapters of the jest-biography,12 we read only of noble exploits, good humour and widespread approval of the six-foot Lancashire serving-girl.

11. See Charles Hindley, The Old Book Collector's Miscellany (London, 1872), II, xxvi (Introduction to the 1635 text).
12. I have used the reprint of Long Meg of Westminster in Short Fiction of the Seventeenth Century, selected and edited by C.C. Mish (New York, 1963).

What the dramatists did not know about Moll Frith they supplied, I believe, either from the play or from the tales of Long Meg ; for a similar atmosphere pervades the play and the jest-biography. There are some similarities in the verbal jests, too : Will Summers, Henry VIII's jester, swears that King Harry shall buy Meg :

> "Why so, Will ?" quoth Doctor Skelton. "Because," quoth Will Summers, "that she shall be kept for breed ; for if the King would marry her to Long Sanders of the court, they would bring forth none but soldiers."[13]

Compare Laxton's speech on Moll :

> Methinks a brave captain might get all his soldiers on her, and ne'er be beholding to a company of Milc End milksops.
> (II.i.194-195)

In Long Meg of Westminster occur the probable sources which suggested incidents for three episodes in the play : Moll's meeting with Laxton in Gray's Inn Fields (which is used twice, against Laxton and Trapdoor as well) ; the imposture of Trapdoor as a veteran soldier ; and the attempted arrest of Jack Dapper. In chapter four there is a tale of Sir James of Castile's suit to Meg's mistress ; because of his bold oaths Meg is commissioned by her mistress to meet him in St. George's Fields for a duel. Sir James is unaware of his opponent's identity, and when he arrives he fails to recognize Meg in man's attire. Middleton made Moll's opponent a suitor to the girl herself, since any service she was in (a feature of the Life and Long Meg) he has suppressed. Of course, this situation —a lover's defeat in a contest of arms with his admired mistress—no doubt appealed to Middleton's taste ; Moll is his portrait of a dominant woman par excellence. Moll reveals her identity to Laxton before she beats him (III.i.60), whereas Meg beats and disarms her opponent, only later revealing herself.

13. Mish, Short Fiction, p.87.

In chapter six there is a tale of how Meg used the Bailey of Westminster after he had tried to arrest a friend of hers. She assaulted the Bailey, tied him up and dragged him through a pond five or six times, then battered him with a cudgel as he lay on the bank till he was almost unconscious. A kind of tacit agreement to keep quiet on the part of her acquaintance prevented any repercussions. Moll is less violent and her frustration of the law is more credible: with Trapdoor, she holds back the sergeants sent to arrest Jack Dapper until he has made good his escape (III.iii.210-240). No official repercussion seems to ensue in this case either.

Chapter five of Long Meg describes the compassion Meg felt for poor veteran soldiers. However, the soldier Meg encounters repudiates petty crime, but Dekker's Trapdoor is, as we know, a fraud. Dekker makes this impostor an occasion for an irrelevant spate of canting terms thriftily made over from The Belman as he worked, no doubt, on the two pieces at the same time. This scene, with its reminiscences about minor criminal escapades and immoral pleasures, sacrifices the image carefully built by Middleton of Moll's free and generous spirit, a spirit essentially of chaste womanhood. To make amends, she is given a long speech at the end of the canting scene which ends with the appeal "Must you have / A black ill name, because ill things you know ?" Middleton would not have needed to ask an idle question like that at this stage of his career.

Moll's contribution to the romantic plot concerning Sebastian and Mary consists in falling in with Sebastian's plan to make it appear she is willing to marry him. Dekker began the plot in act I and may have invented it himself. In this plot the implication is that Moll is repulsive, which jars somewhat with Laxton's attentions to her and her final appearance in bridal dress. Typical of Dekker in the romantic plot is the young virgin distressed at the apparent death or disaffection of her lover. He uses a similar situation in I Honest Whore, in which Infelice is deeply troubled at the seeming death of her lover Hippolito, whilst he has an innocent association with Bellafront, a woman of good heart and

bad reputation. Likewise, her father is, because of a quarrel, opposed to a match between Infelice and Hippolito. Middleton, it is interesting to note, makes the low character Laxton pursue Moll for lecherous motives ; Dekker makes the gentlemanly Sebastian pay mock courtship to her. Her victory over temptation and her helpfulness towards the lovers are episodes added by the dramatists as different ways of ennobling the real-life virago : in actual fact no-one is reported to have wooed Mistress Frith at all.

The citizen plot seems, from the division made above, to be Middleton's work in the main, although its curious culmination is surely due to Dekker. Two episodes in the occasionally tedious intrigue of the tempting of the two City wives to adultery are worth brief attention : in III.ii. Mrs. Gallipot walks out of a dinner in front of friends, and without actually lying, allows her husband to assume pregnancy pains are the cause. In the third chapter of Robert Tofte's The Batchelars Banquet (1603), a quarry Middleton used in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, pregnancy and childbirth are utilised by a wife to make the husband accept any of her moods or tempers ; and in chapter two, the end for which Mrs. Gallipot's pregnancy is feigned is mentioned : the entertaining of some lusty gallant. The wife in the satirical pamphlet "hunts after feasts and sollemne meetings ... takes with her ... some lusty gallant, of whom she claims kinred, though in very deed there can be no such matter, but only a smooth cullor to deceive her husband."[14] Just so Mrs. Gallipot claims kinred with Laxton, indeed posing as a former betrothed of his (III.ii.124). This device of a pre-contract to extract money was of course used by Middleton in A Trick. Mrs. Gallipot is yet another example of the mature married woman who can manage her foolish husband and a desirable young man as well, and who is willing to pay for her pleasures : "she cozens her husband to keep me; and I'll keep her honest as long as I can," says Laxton (II.i.144-145). The absurd

14. The Batchelars Banquet, ed. F.P. Wilson (Oxford, 1929), p.15. Wilson makes the attribution to Tofte.

reason eventually given by Dekker in IV.ii. for the intrigue between the wife and the gallant is characteristic of the part-author of the two Ho plays.

Gallipot, Tiltyard and Openwork are three hearty citizens who enjoy fowling with spaniels, and the manner in which the honest wives avoid the gallants' importunities is slightly reminiscent of The Merry Wives of Windsor. Master Openwork's trust in his wife's ability to handle a lustful suitor, especially, is not unlike Master Page's, another sanguine gentleman who enjoyed a birding expedition.

The main plot is completed by Middleton, who sketches a motif he was to use not long after in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside. Sebastian is reported to have made an elopement by water to marry Moll Cutpurse (V.ii.). Through this plot the heavy father, Sir Sebastian, is made to repent of the mistake he has made in not letting his son marry the wife of his own choice. Attacks on forced or unequal matches began to find an interested audience in this decade : Dekker himself has a passage "Against forced Mariages" in The Seuen deadly Sinnes of London (1606).[15] Indeed, the debate over women's freedom, the suppression of which was central to the convention of the arranged marriage, grew into the "Hic Mulier— Haec Vir" controversy of the century's second decade. As women became more and more emancipated through the spread of affluence, the reaction set in and the emboldened wives of London were satirically dubbed "He-women".[16] Moll is militant womanhood personified ; the dramatists, especially Dekker, may have changed the character of the real-life virago in order to show how an emancipated, virtuous woman can prevail against the prejudice of her society. Middleton, I suspect, would have been fascinated by the idea of portraying Moll as a dominant woman, superior to

15. Grosart's Dekker, II, 70-71.
16. L.B. Wright has a good summary of the controversy in Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England (Chapel Hill, 1935), pp.465-507. On p.493 he mentions a growing taste amongst women for masculine dress and a short hairstyle.

men in virtue and physical strength, for different reasons than Dekker. For in his next play he drew an even more fantastic transvestite—Mrs. Low-water of No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's. The Roaring Girl is not a good example of Middleton's characterisation, however, because Dekker's disregard for consistent psychology is evident at every point.

SOURCES

Incidents concerning Moll Cutpurse : Long Meg of Westminster (1582 and later versions); facts taken from real life.
Romantic plot : Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, The Honest Whore, Part I (1604).
Citizen plot : Hints from Robert Tofte, The Batchelars Banquet (1603).

Whilst Middleton was passing through this period of comparatively infrequent dramatic writing, two lively young men had been making a great success with tragedies and tragicomedies for the King's men. Beaumont and Fletcher had begun writing aft after Middleton, but by 1610 or 1611 they had a reputation which far outshone Middleton's. Clearly it was time to write something in their manner, something more exotic and sensational, in which there was no cheating of heirs by conny-catchers, and in which there was a strong romantic interest. Confusion about the real nature of relationships is also an essential element in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher written before 1611, sometimes arising because women dress as boys, sometimes because facts about a person's origin come to light only at the end of a play. Middleton had a bent for this sort of thing already, for he has a scene (IV.i.) in The Roaring Girl in which Mary Fitzallard, dressed as a man, is kissed by Sebastian, whilst Moll, also dressed as a man, comments on the unusual spectacle this episode presents. Shakespeare has girls dressed as men in scenes together with their lovers, but he never needs a commentator to point out the dubious excitement inherent in the transvestism.

No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's is a fan-

tastic play, full of incredible events and confusions of identity. As a result, it is difficult to bring moral judgment to bear on the characters' actions, because so much is improbable. The whole action is designed to demonstrate the superiority of women's intellect and dynamism as a foundation for happy marriage and prosperity, the basic necessities for procreation and society's survival. Middleton subordinates the men to achieve this, in one case having a husband assume the rôle of servant to his masterful wife.

Scholars have not previously assigned this comedy to a date immediately after The Roaring Girl (1608), but have preferred to place it after the finest of the City comedies, A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (1613). No Wit does, however, have its scene in London ; and one of the sources which I shall show the play uses dates from 1611, and, belonging to the ephemeral class of literature, renders composition likely in that year. R.H. Barker[17] comments that "the play shows the influence of Beaumont and Fletcher," but he does not specify which of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays it shows the influence of nor in what manner it shows it. The closest example of their drama in theme and plot is The Scornful Lady, a play published in quarto in 1616. Baldwin Maxwell,[18] as against later dates given by Schoenbaum in his revision of Harbage's Annals, urges that "the composition of The Scornful Lady be assigned to 1610." His evidence is excellent for the most part, and it is not unreasonable to assume that Middleton may have seen the comedy.

The action of The Scornful Lady concerns the fortunes in courtship of three women, a rich widow and two sisters, one of them called simply a "Lady" and the other Martha. The main action, concerning the Lady, Martha, Elder Loveless and Welford, is of no concern to Middleton's play, except that we may note it has a marriage arranged between two men, Elder Loveless and Wel-

17. Thomas Middleton, p.181.
18. Studies in Beaumont, Fletcher and Massinger (Chapel Hill, 1939), pp.17-28.

ford in disguise. This was no doubt in Middleton's mind when he inserted the mock-marriage episode between two women in his own play. The subplot concerns Young Loveless, the Widow, and a rival suitor named Morecraft. Morecraft is older and wealthier than Young Loveless ; but it is not money the Widow wants, for her husband has left her plenty. She prefers to remarry for "honour", as Middleton's wealthy Lady Goldenfleece prefers to contract a marriage of love, having means enough. Both Young Loveless and the disguised Mrs. Low-water, the suitor to Lady Goldenfleece, employ a similar device to get rid of the rival suitor : each cites evidence of his competitor's former immorality. Morecraft is accused of having "had a bastard, his own toward issue, whipt"[19] and Mrs. Low-water produces a love-letter containing an offer of adultery, which Sir Gilbert Lambstone had sent to her as an impoverished wife. It is true that No Wit has three extra suitors for the hand of Lady Goldenfleece, but they are very insignificant indeed. One of them, Weatherwise, is Middleton's addition, a character put in to quote humorously from the ephemeral almanacs which help to date the play. The other two, Pepperton and Overdone, are included chiefly so that they can participate in a masque not unlike the allegorical representations Middleton wrote for the City.

The debt to The Scornful Lady is rather general,[20] although the idea of having a wealthy widow sought after by two completely different types of men—a young blade and a crafty old man—is very like Fletcher and not typical of Middleton, insofar as Fletcher is fond of violent clashes in the outlook of opposing characters. Lady Goldenfleece differs, however, from Beaumont and Fletcher's Widow, in being more sensual. She is the mature and desirable woman with

19. Quotation from The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher, ed. Arnold Glover, I (Cambridge, 1905), 269.
20. There seems, however, to be one verbal reminiscence : sons and heirs are compared to a "flash of lightning" at p.253 of Beaumont and Fletcher and II.iii.137 of No Wit. ....

money, able to choose at leisure amongst the various suitors who present themselves to her. Mrs. Low-water, on the other hand, is, in her role of gallant, the lineal descendant of the witty, fortune-hunting young men of A Mad World and A Trick. Her reason for wishing to practise her sensational deception on the widow must have been invented by Middleton if he was imitating the situation in The Scornful Lady, for obviously Young Loveless's suit needed no reason. Lady Goldenfleece's husband apparently extorted the Low-waters' land from them (I.i.161-168), and she is quite content to hold on to his gains.

The plot concerning the Twilights, Sandfield, Sunset and his daughter has been convincingly demonstrated to be taken from Giambattista della Porta's La Sorella (Naples, 1604) by D.J. Gordon.[21] The debt had, however, long been known,[22] and has been discussed by three other scholars besides Gordon.[23] Nevertheless, I shall go over the main points with a view to adding a few remarks and pointing out what seems to me significant about the borrowing. La Sorella[24] has only one story to tell, and Middleton cuts it down so that it will go into one half of his play : Fardo, father to Attilio, had once gone to Poland in the service of Queen Bona, and had sent for Costanza, his wife, and Cleria, his daughter, to join

21. "Middleton's No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's and Della Porta's La Sorella," RES, XVII (1941), 400-414.
22. Karl Christ in his Quellenstudien zu den Dramen Thomas Middletons (Borna-Leipzig, 1905), p.109, remarks that A.L. Stiefel in 1891 knew of the relationship.
23. Discussions found in : David Orr, The Influence of Learned Italian Drama of the Sixteenth Century on English Drama Before 1623, unpublished University of North Carolina dissertation (1960); Louise George Clubb, Giambattista Della Porta, Dramatist (Princeton, 1965), 289-293 ; Lowell Edward Johnson, A Critical Edition of Thomas Middleton's "No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's", unpublished University of Wisconsin dissertation (1964), pp.xxxi-lxx.
24. The text used is that found in Le Commedie, ed. Vincenzo Spampanato (Bari, 1910), I.

Attilio and him from Nola. The ship aboard which Costanza and Cleria were voyaging disappeared, and no news of it was to be had. In actual fact Turkish galleys had seized the voyagers and carried them off to Constantinople to be sold as slaves. The two women were split up, but Costanza was for sale two years after. Pardo sent the now grown-up Attilio with Trinca, a servant, to ransom the pair for three hundred scudi, but at Venice Attilio fell in love with a beautiful young bondservant, Sofia, whom he ransomed for two hundred ducats and married. On Trinca's advice he wrote as if from Constantinople, advising his father that his mother was dead and that he had ransomed his sister, Cleria, for two hundred ducats. Before the action of La Sorella begins, Sofia has been taken home to Nola as Cleria. Pardo, as the play opens, wishes to marry "Cleria" to Trasimaco, a braggart captain, who will take her without dowry ; and Attilio to Sulpizia, Orgio's niece. The following evening will witness the nuptials (I.i.).

Trinca arranges a plot to defeat the objects of this match, for Sulpizia is really in love with Attilio's friend Erotico. Trinca suggests that Trasimaco must be eliminated as a suitor, so that a mock-marriage can go forward between "Cleria" and Erotico. The two girls can join their true partners at night, and a real marriage can take place after Pardo's death. Attilio is instructed to prejudice Pardo against the Captain, and Erotico to ask for "Cleria's" hand (I.iii.).

Thus far Middleton follows Della Porta, but omits a love scene between Cleria and Attilio (I.iv.). Sir Oliver Twilight is the English Pardo, Philip and Sandfield are Attilio and Erotico, Grace and Jane are Cleria and Sulpizia. To simplify matters, Middleton does not mention Grace's former name. Immediately he plunges in with a threatened duel (I.i.32) between Philip and Sandfield over Jane, thus saving a scene in which we witness Erotico learning of Attilio's suit. Middleton also brings the events nearer home, but with a hazy sense of geography. Antwerp replaces Venice ; but Lady Twilight and her daughter were on their way to Guernsey when they were captured. Since slavery meant little to an English audience,

we learn that Philip and Savourwit spent the ransom money, six hundred crowns, on courtesans. Weatherwise, an old superstitious pedant, is Trasimaco's equivalent, but he is quickly removed from the Twilight plot as a suitor. Philip has reported his mother dead.

The plan in La Sorella goes forward : Erotico, requiring no dowry, is favoured as the new suitor, and Trasimaco is to be dismissed. Weatherwise, as I noted, is dismissed at once, to free him for his rôle as suitor in the other plot. Sir Oliver is rather casual about the dismissal : "I have a little business now" he says (I.i.280), which perhaps echoes Pardo's remark to Trasimaco : "Non ho tempo da spendere in chiacchiere" (III.vi.). In No Wit, just before this, we receive a hint of a secret concerning Grace and Jane which Lady Goldenfleece possesses. This is introduced to bind the two plots together, but it produces a loose end : in I.ii. Jane goes to see Mrs. Low-water, and asks about the secret ; Mrs. Low-water opines that it must be some land or cash left to Jane, but now diverted to Grace by someone's bribing of Lady Goldenfleece to remain silent. Gordon (p.414) suggests this is an abortive attempt to introduce the motif of the dowries from V.i.-iv. of La Sorella, scenes which involve Sulpizia's Nurse and a secret of Orgio's, Sunset's counterpart. Sulpizia's deceased father had left his goods to Orgio, with instructions to give a dowry of two thousand ducats to Sulpizia (really Cleria, since the two had been exchanged as infants), if his own daughter, the "Cleria" of Pardo, was not found ; if she were, then she must get ten thousand ducats. We hear no more about this in Middleton's play.

Middleton contrives to add spicy details where he can : Savourwit dwells briefly on the possibility of the young men having to make love to each other's real wives for the old man's benefit (I.i.139-140), and he mentions Grace's pregnancy (I.iii.35). "Cleria", Attilio's wife, is not reduced to the distress of imagining she might have to marry another man while secretly pregnant with a clandestine husband's child.

Perhaps, however, the scenes which attracted Middleton to this tale of near-incest and lost

identities were the extremely funny central scenes in the third and fourth acts of La Sorella. These concern Pedolitro, an old man, and his son, whom Pedolitro has just ransomed from the Turks. He bears a letter from Costanza and a report that the real Cleria has disappeared. Pedolitro's news is two months old, but Attilio's information dated from four years earlier. The Dutch Merchant in No Wit brings a report that Lady Twilight was alive a month ago, which contradicts Philip's information about her death given ten weeks before. Middleton thus reduces the enormity of the son's selfishness and prepares for a more credible forgiveness on Lady Twilight's part.

There follows a scene, III.iii., in which Pedolitro examines the "Cleria" Attilio brought home and recognises her as Sofia from Venice. This is better than Middleton's version, since the Venetian hostelry is frequented by people from Nola ; the Dutch Merchant recognises Grace by a stroke of chance, for he happened to see her in an Antwerp public house. Both "Cleria" and Grace deny the charge of impersonation ; the traveller in each case departs, and leaves his boy behind. Attilio and Trinca now enter, and they are taxed with Pedolitro's allegations. Trinca says he will check Pedolitro's story with the boy, who speaks only Turkish :

Cabrasciam ogniboraf, enbusaim Constantinopla ?

The boy answers in Turkish, which Trinca interprets as meaning "his father was never in Constantinople" (III.iv.). Savourwit, who is questioned without Philip, expands on this false translation to include suggestions of madness in the Merchant. What motives could Pedolitro and the Merchant have had for telling lies ? In Della Porta (III.iv.), Trinca suggests it is for a jest, but Middleton is at once more realistic and more cynical. Savourwit sees it as a policy to "work out a piece of money on you" (I.iii.174).

In both plays the traveller returns immediately, after the witty servant has tricked the perplexed master. Naturally the little boy is questioned by his father, and each says he was interrogated by a man whom he kept telling he

could not understand. Thus the spendthrift son is trapped and the substitute daughter is in deep trouble, but in neither play is anything much made of this plight. Della Porta resolves the difficulty by bringing in the lost Costanza, who by chance meets Attilio and Trinca before anyone else in Nola. She had been set free from her master because she had grown older and feebler. When the recognitions have taken place she is persuaded by Attilio to forgive him and acknowledge Sofia as Cleria. In IV.iv. this acknowledgment takes place very convincingly, and we hear no more of Pedolitro's correct identification. When, however, Attilio congratulates Costanza on her performance, he is horrorstruck to learn that the reunion was genuine ; his wife is his sister, the missing Cleria. Costanza, as Gordon says, takes a very matter-of-fact line towards the revealed incest : she merely says intimacy must stop. In No Wit, upon the appearance of Lady Twilight accompanied by a friend Beveril (Mrs. Low-water's brother) who has ransomed her, Philip is moved by Savourwit to plead for help in the matter of the false identification of Grace as her daughter (II.ii.). This is like La Sorella, but Middleton has really reworked this climax very considerably : first, Philip does not acknowledge his marriage when he tells his mother how the girl was brought home (II.ii.), whereas Attilio does ; second, he does not have Grace prepared for the interview (IV.i.) with Lady Twilight in which all is to turn out well, and he adds the detail that Grace is with child, whereas Trinca briefs "Cleria", who is not pregnant, beforehand ; and third, Lady Twilight is not aware that her recognition means incest—indeed, she prays that marriage has not taken place (IV.i.238). Philip produces a ring to prove matrimony[25] (strange, in view of the fact that fifteen lines before his mother's prayer that he is not married, he had said he was : a mistake, no doubt, which lets some pressure out of the final explosion), and Grace recounts its origin as a memento given to her when a child. "Cleria" is not even present when mother and son

25. A device, according to Johnson, Edition, p. liii, taken from Terence's Heauton Timorumenos.

discuss the revelation. Both Della Porta's and Middleton's young men are now inclined to suicide. But notice the effect of Middleton's reworking here : Philip is more calculating about his mother's affections, Lady Twilight must feign the recognition for her husband, and Grace is harrowed by distressing doubts;

The Dutch Merchant is retained till IV.i. to maintain his version of the ransom story, whereas Della Porta dismisses Pedolitro when Costanza arrives ; this means that Lady Twilight has to cap all Philip's lies with plausible interpretations. Gordon sees this as part of Middleton's thesis concerning the wit and resource of women, but it seems to me the Dutch Merchant's honesty is put there to illustrate the dark maze sin runs into, the entangling shifts which have entrapped Philip. Providence alone frees him from the nightmare, but not before the possibility of estrangement from his father and suicide have threatened him.

For Della Porta, the dénouement is easy, because the old Nurse who knows that the girls were exchanged in infancy has a credible desire for revenge against Orgio, who has beaten her. Orgio has kept the secret for fear of losing Sulpizia's inheritance, the difference being eight thousand ducats. But this is the first we have heard of a secret, whereas Middleton put in two pieces of preparation, one in I.i., another in IV.i., where we are informed that Sunset's daughter is "much about the age of our girl" and "both were nurs'd together." In V.iv. Orgio confirms the story as true, which is borne out by a red mark on "Cleria's" left arm. Attilio and Erotico arrange matters to their satisfaction in the final scene.

Middleton has once more taken liberties with his original. Obviously he wished to avoid Della Porta's anti-climax by leaving his revelation later, for Della Porta has four anticlimactic scenes. At Lady Goldenfleece's wedding-feast, where she engages herself to Beveril, Sir Oliver decides to despatch the marriages ; Lady Goldenfleece is shocked when she hears Jane is meant for Philip. She rearranges the couples and explains the duplicity of Sunset's wife. Mrs. Sunset had kept

the fact from her husband because even when she died, he had not grown rich enough to give the girl all she thought she should have. Middleton is on the credit side here, for none but the dead is subject to castigation for double-dealing, whereas Orgio and the Nurse are both guilty of conniving at Cleria's inferior upbringing in La Sorella. Indeed, if Orgio had not beaten the Nurse, it seems he would have countenanced incest between "Sulpizia" and Attilio.

Middleton has, in general, improved on Della Porta, although his characters are not all so blameless as Della Porta's. Philip, in particular, is a weak-willed scapegrace, forerunner of a new type of character which begins to appear in Middleton's tragicomedies, the cowardly fop, the mother's spoiled darling. Abberzanes in The Witch is such a person ; like his peers in the tragicomedies, he gets a girl with child and tries to mend matters by deceit. Sir Oliver, too, gains by being more idiosyncratic than Pardo, with his favourite exclamation of annoyed surprise, "Hoyday", and his insistence on knowing whether Philip's or the Dutch Merchant's version of the Antwerp incidents is true. As for Lady Twilight, her means do not justify the ends—to free Philip from implication in defrauding his father and to enable him to keep his beloved near him. Accepting one daughter for another is, in any case, somewhat unrealistic. Savourwit is very much the Italianate witty servant, and it is to be regretted that his comical cynicism and clear moral sight were not repeated by Middleton in another play. Savourwit recommended that Philip reveal all to his mother, including the pregnant wife, which might have helped matters. This unfortunate wife, rather submissive, is one of the sentimental females Middleton draws occasionally, pregnancy often being a sign of devoted femininity in his plays.

In this first essay at keeping pace with Beaumont and Fletcher, Middleton borrowed their ideas to produce peripeteias and shocks at every turn. One of their favourite situations is the frustrated wedding night—in their plays wedding nights are more often an occasion of frustration than of consummation. Characteristically, he managed a wedding night both titillating and surprising

for the audience.

R.C. Bald's[26] piecemeal suggestions for a source in 1934 are difficult to understand ; one can only assume he ignored Karl Christ's remark about Stiefel. His example offers a caution in pronouncing on the debts of parts of plots. Gordon, however, did not acknowledge Stiefel's work. This early German scholarship is awesomely extensive, though also eccentric. Karl Christ cites Stiefel's theory which accompanies his identification of the source. It is extraordinary. Stiefel thought it possible that Jean Rotrou's La Soeur (1647), which employs La Sorella as a source, was the source of the subplot of No Wit, because a later poet (James Shirley) inserted the subplot before the 1657 printing. In fact, Shirley tinkered with No Wit in 1638, and the text as we have it represents a 1638 revival in Dublin.[27]

F. Holthausen[28] claims that Trimalchio's banquet in Petronius' fragmentary Satyricon is the direct source of Weatherwise's novel feast. Here is the account :

> The course that followed our praise failed expectation of its greatness ; its novelty, however, drew the eyes of everyone. For a circular tray had twelve signs arranged round it in a ring, upon each of which the designer of the structure had placed especially appropriate food : on Aries there were chick-peas similar to a ram's head, on Taurus a piece of beef, on Gemini testicles and kidneys, on Cancer a wreath of flowers, on Leo an African fig, on Virgo the womb of a sow that had never borne young, on Libra a balance in one side of which was a kind of pastry, in the other a cake, on Scorpio a crawfish, on Capricorn a lobster, on Aquarius a goose, on

26. "Sources of City Comedies," pp.386-387.
27. The new prologue he furnished is reprinted in The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley, ed. William Gifford and Alexander Dyce (London, 1833), VI, 492-493.
28. "Zu Middleton's No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's," Anglia, XII (1889), 526-527.

Pisces two red mullets ...[29]

Christ says that Weatherwise's banquet is an echo of this, and the term is just right ; in appendix B, in which I discuss the 1611 Bretnor and Neve Almanacs, I shall show that the significations for each zodiacal sign come from nearer home, though the concept of the novelty feast may have come from the Roman satirist.

Samuel Brooke made an adaptation of La Sorella for his academic Latin play Adelphe (1611), performed in Cambridge 1611-12. The play was never printed, so that there is small possibility that Middleton knew it. Della Porta was, however, well-known enough to have been used by at least two English dramatists before Middleton wrote No Wit.

The play seems, from the Epilogue, to have been acted originally in an open-air theatre. Johnson[30] surmises that it is a King's play, on the ground that the dramas Shirley doctored in 1638 were probably all King's men's. This would plausibly explain why Middleton strove so hard to pattern his play after the model of Beaumont and Fletcher. There are more opportunities for actors who personated women in the play than ever before, and a number of new characters—Philip, suicidal and romantic, Pickadille, the clown,[31] and Weatherwise, the eccentric who affects the action only slightly. The play has the air of an experiment, and there is a great deal that is new about it. The source material itself indicates a new departure, a rather significant one.

SOURCES

Main plot : Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, The Scornful Lady (?1610).

Subplot : Giambattista della Porta, La Sorella (1604).
Suggestions from Petronius, Satyricon (?60 A.D.) ; from the 1611 Almanacs of Jeffery Neve and Thomas Bretnor.

29. Translated from Holthausen ; chapter 35 of Satyricon.
30. Edition, p.lxxxvi.
31. See Enid Welsford, The Fool (New York, 1961), chapter XI, for a discussion of this type of clown.

Before Middleton finally turned away from his earlier mode of writing he produced one more City comedy ; but it is a City comedy with a difference. A Chaste Maid in Cheapside is all in verse, and it is faultlessly plotted. Middleton manages four plots with deceptive ease, two contrasting pairs, and at the centre he places the image of Cheapside itself. The result is, by common consent, an hilarious play.

The comedy may be dated about 1613 by an episode concerning the confiscation of meat in II. ii. During Elizabeth's reign and throughout James', there was a sequence of proclamations prohibiting the consumption of meat during Lent.[32] A very strict proclamation broke this sequence on 12 November 1613, which is perhaps the first official result of a letter dated 9 February 1612/13 from the Privy Council to the Lord Mayor. Bald (p.40) quotes this as proof that the Lent laws in 1613 were more strictly enforced than any before. Two infamous "promoters" or meat inspectors of 1613 were Evan Birch and Nicholas Stott,[33] who were issued with Privy Council warrants on 16 November 1613. These two might possibly be the pair in the play who are so amusingly made to confiscate the Country Wench's bastard, but if Bald is right in saying that the play was performed just after Lent, 1613, they are clearly too late.

A Chaste Maid was performed at the Swan by the Lady Elizabeth's men, and it is the only play known certainly to have been put on there. Between 1611 and 1613 this handsome theatre experienced a brief revival of fortunes, but thereafter it declined.[34] The Lady Elizabeth's men did not themselves come into existence till 1611.

The play is, like the earlier City comedies, largely invented by Middleton, but he incorporates in it some borrowed materials. Miss E. L. Bucking-

32. R.C. Bald, "Chronology of Middleton's Plays," pp. 39-40.
33. Richard J. Wall, A Critical Edition of Thomas Middleton's "A Chast Mayd in Cheap-side," unpublished University of Michigan dissertation (1958), p.7.
34. C.W. Wallace, "The Swan Theatre and the Earl of Pembroke's Servants," Englische Studien, XLIII (1911), 391 ; E.K. Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 413-414.

ham[35] traced the passage which perhaps inspired the basic situation in one of the four plots, that concerning the Allwits and Sir Walter Whorehound. She found it in Thomas Campion's Obseruations in the Art of English Poesie (1602), in the eighth epigram in chapter six. It runs thus :

> Barnzy stiffly vows that hees no Cuckold,
> Yet the vulgar ev'rywhere salutes him,
> With strange signes of hornes, from ev'ry corner ;
> Whereso'er he commes, a sundry Cucco
> Still frequents his eares; yet hees no Cuccold.
> But this Barnzy knowes, that his Matilda,
> Skorning him, with Haruy plays the wanton.
> Knowes it ? nay, desires it, and by prayers
> Dayly begs of Heav'n that it for ever
> May stand firm for him ; yet hees no Cuccold.
> And 'tis true, for Haruy keeps Matilda,
> Fosters Barnzy, and relieves his household,
> Buyes the cradle, and begets the Children,
> Payes the Nurses, ev'ry charge defraying,
> And thus truly playes Matildas husband.
> So that Barnzy now becomes a cypher,
> And himself th' adultrer of Matilda.
> Mock him not with hornes, the case is altered;
> Haruy beares the wrong, he proves the Cuccold.

This passage gives us the originals of Allwit, his wife, Sir Walter Whorehound, and the bastard children. The account is really a little vignette, for it is static, but it perhaps helped Middleton to visualise the initial relationship of the characters. Or, it is possible, as Miss Buckingham suggests, that both accounts go back to a common original, some local scandal. Barnzy is a most interesting character, very like Sophonirus in the anonymous Second Maiden's Tragedy (1611). Today we would regard his type as psychologically sick ; he and Allwit are utterly devoid of love or possessiveness, and Allwit seems to derive a certain piquant satisfaction from watching Sir Walter Whorehound's jealousy of his mistress, Mrs. Allwit. Indeed, Sir Walter

35. "Campion's Art of English Poesie and Middleton's Chaste Maid in Cheapside," PMLA, XLIII (1928), 784-792.

is truly her husband in everything except name ; he has had six bastard children by her and a seventh is on the way. Of course, the material profit to Allwit is considerable, and there are two slight hints that he is enjoying intimacy with his wife, an intimacy which really amounts to adultery. Mrs. Allwit, like Matilda, is no martyr to her lot, as Miss Buckingham points out, but welcomes her lover (I.ii.134).

Middleton models part of a long speech by Allwit (I.ii.11-56) on Campion's epigram, even echoing the phrases of the epigram verbally : "He gets me all my children, and pays the nurse" rephrases Campion's "and begets the Children, / Payes the Nurses, ev'ry charge defraying" (11.13-14). Campion also introduces a blasphemous note when he speaks of Barnzy "by prayers / Dayly beg[ging] of Heav'n" that the status quo may continue. This suggested, I think, Psalm XXIII to Middleton, for Allwit congratulates himself on "Finding a table furnish'd to my hand" (I.ii.12), as the psalmist praises the Lord when he says : "Thou preparest a table before me." Allwit also blesses "the founder", Sir Walter, as the psalmist affirms his reliance on his Lord.

Allwit's fear of insecurity may be related to Middleton's own financial difficulties at this time, as Campion does not suggest in his sketch of Barnzy the degree of concern for material stability evidenced by Allwit. We may note in passing that Middleton had been in court for debt in December 1608[36] and on 20 June 1612 "one Thomas Middleton a Poett" was amongst the defendants to an action brought by Christopher Bradley, an attorney of Lyons Inn. On this latter occasion Middleton was charged with owing £7 on a bond of £26, his creditor regarding the debt as desperate.[37]

An alternative theory is available for the behavior of Allwit, the most striking character in the play. Allan H. Gilbert[38] quotes a passage out

36. S. Schoenbaum, "A New Middleton Record," MLR, LV (1960), 82-84.
37. Mark Eccles, "Middleton a Poett," pp.534-535.
38. "The Prosperous Wittol in Giovanni Battista Modio and Thomas Middleton," SP, XLI (1944), 235-237.

of Giovanni Battista Modio's Il Convito overo del Peso della Moglie, dove ragionando si conchiude, che non puo la Donna dishonesta far vergogna à l' Huomo (1554), which tells of that man who, having a beautiful wife, can buy all the comforts and offices he wishes. The writer says that such a man must have "il Cornucopia" in his house, that is, the horn of plenty ; the term "cornuto" is then a very honourable one. Allwit may be a comic character based on this learned Italian paradox, a character whose marriage is a monstrous perversion of the ideal which the chaste maid and her lover are seeking.

Campion's epigram and, perhaps, Modio's paradox, provide only the initial situation in the Allwit-Whorehound plot. Sir Walter purposes to marry Moll Yellowhammer, the chaste maid, thus entering into the second plot, the romance of Moll and Touchwood Junior, who are constantly thwarted by Moll's vulgar and materialistic parents. Sir Walter and Touchwood Junior become enemies, and finally fight a duel in which Touchwood Junior is wounded. He therefore shams death, and as a result Sir Walter is arrested for manslaughter. R.C. Bald[39] suggests that the enmity between Moll's two suitors is based on a situation found in Francis Beaumont's The Knight of the Burning Pestle, which failed when it was acted in 1607. It was published in 1613. The merchant Venturewell, like Yellowhammer, tries to prevent his apprentice Jasper's suit to his daughter, Luce, for whom a wealthy old husband, Humphrey, has been secured. Luce and Jasper attempt to elope, but are caught by Venturewell and his men on horses (II.i.). Luce is haled away to close confinement, and Jasper left to seek a new way of winning his beloved.

Moll and Touchwood Junior make two attempts to elope before they eventually succeed, but only the second one seems to have anything in common with the version in Beaumont's play. Moll is caught by her mother in a boat on the Thames, and dragged home by the hair to be locked up in a little room (IV.iii.). Both Jasper and Touchwood Junior employ a similar device to successfully secure their

39. "Sources of City Comedies," p.387.

brides. Jasper pretends to die of grief and has a funeral arranged, which involves having his coffin deposited in Luce's chamber. She is then removed from the chamber in his stead, and the pair resurrect themselves only when Venturewell repents of his treatment of the lovers (IV.i.). Touchwood Junior, as noted, pretends to die as a result of the duel, and communicates with Moll warning her to "die" of grief over him. Only when it is certain that the Yellowhammers feel ashamed of their attempt to impose their will on Moll do the lovers arise from their coffins (V.iv.). This ritual death scene, with all Cheapside present, illustrates the kind of divorce necessary from bourgeois Cheapside life before a chaste maid can marry the husband of her choice.

The third plot concerns Touchwood Senior and the Kixes, all of whom have absurd marital problems. Touchwood Senior has to separate from his wife because they are begetting far too many children, and the Kixes are on the verge of divorce because they are childless. The trouble is that Touchwood Senior and his wife are poverty-stricken, whereas Sir Oliver Kix is wealthy and will be wealthier still if he begets an heir—in fact, Sir Walter will lose his income to any child born to the Kixes. Middleton seems to have borrowed some part of this plot from Niccolo Machiavelli's La Mandragola (1524), or perhaps from the later dramatic version by Andrea Calmo, La Potione (Venice, 1561). Their plots are so alike that I shall summarise the relevant part of Machiavelli's only. Callimaco is a young man in love with Madonna Lucrezia, wife to Nicia Calfucci, a rich Florentine. His best chance of fulfilling his desires lies, he says, in Calfucci's desire, and Lucrezia's, to have children : "Having been married for six years without getting any, and being very rich, they're dying of their desire for a family."[40] With the aid of Siro, a witty servant, Callimaco in disguise sells to Calfucci a concoction made from the root of the mandrake, at enormous expense, but claims there are such fatal side-effects that it is nec-

40. Quotation from The Classic Theatre, ed. Eric Bentley (New York, 1958), I, 8.

essary for another man to lie with the lady after she has taken it ; someone, preferably, whose life does not matter. Callimaco, in the guise of a poor street singer, is made to take the risk, whilst Calfucci rejoices at the fertility to follow. Of course a child is born, and Lucrezia's scruples so far disappear that she agrees to continue the adultery indefinitely (V.iv.).

The Kixes are exactly like the Calfuccis ; we meet them in II.i. quarrelling about the blame for the childlessness :

> Sir Oliver. Nay, pray thee cease, I'll be at more cost yet,
> Thou know'st we are rich enough.
> Lady Kix. All but in blessings,
> And there the beggar goes beyond us. O, o, o,
> To be seven years a wife, and not a child,
> O not a child !
> (II.i.130-133)

Middleton cuts down Machiavelli's plot to get it into much smaller compass. Lady Kix, for example, is quite compliant when Touchwood Senior reveals his scheme to lie with her. It is Sir Oliver who takes the potion, a little vial of almond-milk, having agreed to pay £400 in all for it, and he rides off for a few hours so that it will have the maximum effect. In the interim Touchwood Senior impregnates the lady ; then in due course a child is born, and Touchwood and his wife are invited to free bed and board by Sir Oliver in his gratitude.

Andrea Calmo's version is rather interesting. It is in ordinary Italian and three dialects, Venetian, Paduan and Bergamask. Middleton may have conceived the idea of using English, Welsh and Latin in his play from this comedy. Further, the speech of Despontao (equivalent of Calfucci and Sir Oliver) about the trials of marriage to a young wife is nearer Middleton than Machiavelli's is. Machiavelli has this speech at the beginning of II.v., but Calfucci does not mention anything about having spent a great deal already on drugs to procure fertility. Despontao does however : he

says that "ni boni cibi, ni saluadisini fresche, ni onguenti, no inuodi, ni tegnir ben coltivao la possession" are of any use (Bi^{V}). All three husbands wrongly believe their wives are sterile, it is true, but Middleton has references to "doctor's drugs" for Lady Kix (II.ii.137-138 and 169), which Calfucci has not tried on Lucrezia.

The fourth plot concerns Tim Yellowhammer from Cambridge and his wooing of Sir Walter's Welsh mistress. I have already suggested that the Latin disputation between Tim and his Tutor is a comic reminiscence of Master Crakanthorpe's teaching at Oxford (p.16). Certain other episodes imply further reading before the comedy was written. The Promoter episode in II.ii., although relying for its effectiveness on the Lenten meat laws in operation in 1613, may owe something to Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge's A Looking Glasse for London and England (1594). Adam, a clown, is caught with a piece of beef in his slops by two searchers whilst a period of fasting is taking place ; like Middleton's anonymous Man (II.ii.101-109), he is searched and convicted whilst attempting to deny the presence of any meat.[41]

Perhaps the most celebrated scene in the play is the Christening-scene in III.iii., at which the seventh bastard of Sir Walter and Mrs. Allwit is being christened. F.P. Wilson[42] first identified Middleton's debt to Tofte in 1929 : "there is no sketch of Elizabethan bourgeois life so brilliant in the precision of its phrasing and in the cool detachment of its irony except perhaps a similar scene in Middleton's A Chast Mayd ...," he wrote. The Batchelars Banquet is translated from Les Quinze Joyes de Mariage, but in reality it is a free and successful adaptation. Middleton used the long dialogue in chapter three entitled "The humor of a woman lying in child-bed." The chapter opens with a description of a woman well-advanced in pregnancy, her husband distracted by a thousand and one cares and troubles. The child, Tofte hints, may not even

41. A Looking Glasse for London and England, ed. W.W. Greg (Oxford, 1932), l.2239.
42. The Batchelars Banquet, p.xxii.

be her husband's (B4), but he has to make special journeys day and night "to get with great cost that his wife longs for," which in Allwit's house is, as we would expect, Sir Walter's task (II.ii.50-53). In The Batchelars Banquet the wife becomes spoiled by this special treatment and "can brooke no common meates, but longs for strange and rare things" (B4)—for example, cherries, green peascods and green codlings. Mrs. Allwit needs pickled cucumbers, sugars and wines. But the main expense is that of the Christening-feast itself. The husband in Tofte has to provide sugar, biscuits, comfits, caraways, marmalade and marzipan (B4-B4v), a list similar to the one that taxes Sir Walter's pocket : sugar, wines, plums and comfits. During the feast excessive drinking takes place among the gossips ; here is Tofte's account :

> [The husband must buy in] a hundred other odde and needlesse trifles, which at that time must fill the pockets of daintie dames : ... the nurse priuily pilfers away the suger, the nutmegs and ginger ... sundry dames visit her ... where they about some three or foure houres (or possible halfe a day) will sit chatting with the Child-wife, and by that time the cups of wine haue merily trolde about, and halfe a dosen times moystened their lips with the sweet ioyce of the purpled grape.
>
> (B4v)

Allwit launches into a similar pungently sarcastic account which seems indebted to Tofte :

> Now we shall have such pocketing,
> See how they lurch at the lower end.
> ... Now the cups trole about to wet the gossips' whistles,
> It pours down i' faith, they never think of payment.
>
> (III.ii.55-56 and 78-79)

In the end Allwit has to leave the room to avoid becoming violently nauseated at the sight of the gossips taking uninhibited advantage of the extra-

vagance, before their tongues, freed by liquor, fall to gossip-mongering. This latter touch is also in Tofte.

From the foregoing analysis some idea will have been gained of the complexity of the play's organisation. There are four plots, three of which have sources in satirical drama or prose, and there is a good deal of interaction between them. The meaning of this design has been the subject of two excellent recent articles.[43] Ruby Chatterji in particular stresses how the basic unit of the four plots is the family, and how frequently the word "house" is used in different ways. She urges that "an over-all poetic organization has been achieved by a significant pattern of images and key words related to the play's comic themes and attitudes" (p.116). The images and key words in question are "house", "gold" and related images, and "flesh" and food imagery. Richard Levin finds the four actions carefully arranged in a descending order of significance. "It is evident," he writes, "that these four plots were placed together with a view to exploiting certain symmetrical patterns of character and action" (p.17). His demonstration of the play's patterns is his best performance on any Middleton play. Middleton's reading for this play must have been completely assimilated when he began to write. It is safe to say he had no book open at his elbow as he wrote ; although he had probably read The Batchelars Banquet rather recently. The result is a play which transcends in a triumphant way all of Middleton's depictions of the society of his native city. The familiar themes and types are all recognizable, but so pervasive is the satire—a satire which works through the characters' self-revelation—that we sense all is under control in this play. This balance is not evident again for a number of years in Middleton's career.

43. Richard Levin, "The Four Plots of A Chaste Maid in Cheapside," RES, XVI (1965), 14-24 ; Ruby Chatterji, "Theme, Imagery, and Unity in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside," Renaissance Drama, VIII (1965), 105-126.

SOURCES

Moll - Touchwood Jr. Plot	:	Francis Beaumont, The Knight of the Burning Pestle (1607).
Allwit - Whorehound Plot	:	Thomas Campion, Obseruations in the Art of English Poesie (1602).
Kix - Touchwood Sr. Plot	:	Niccolo Machiavelli, La Mandragola (1524).
Other scenes	:	? Robert Tofte, The Batchelars Banquet (1603).

After his final excursion into satiric social comedy, Middleton was tempted away for good into the realms of tragicomedy and, ultimately, tragedy. Beaumont and Fletcher had, by the date at which Middleton wrote The Witch, turned to plays which had a pseudo-historical background and dramatised conflicts of absolute convictions. Such plays are A King and No King (1611) and Bonduca (ca. 1613), which Eugene M. Waith[44] characterises as a "blend of remoteness and immediacy" and which rely for their effects on emotional crises. He lists (pp. 36-38) the chief features of the tragicomic formula of Beaumont and Fletcher as found in A King and No King, and The Witch displays nearly all of them. The Witch, whose date (ca. 1614) I discuss in appendix C, is the first play of Middleton to number a history book amongst its sources.

Middleton proved unable to write tragicomedy exactly like Fletcher, for The Witch failed at its first performance on the Blackfriars stage by the King's men. The play was not even printed until 1778 when Isaac Reed obtained the manuscript and had it printed privately.

The main plot concerning the Duke, Duchess, Lord Governor and Almachildes is a part of early Italian history from the reign of the Lombard king Alboin, who died in 573 A.D. He slew Cunimund, King of the Gepidae, in battle and mar-

44. The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher (New Haven, 1952), p.29.

ried his daughter, Rosamund. After leading his people into northern Italy, occupying Milan and taking up residence at Pavia, he was not long after murdered through his wife's schemes. For Rosamund had fostered a determination to avenge the occasion when Alboin had enforced her to drink from her father's skull at Verona during the celebration of a victory. Procopius, Paulus Diaconus and Agnellus of Ravenna early recount the history, and thereafter a host of tragic storytellers. Karl Christ[45] gives a full list of recounters and redactors of the story through the thousand years separating it from Middleton, a list which includes Boccaccio's De Casibus Virorum Illustrium, Machiavelli's Florentine History, Bandello (and a French translation in François de Belleforest's Histoires Tragiques), Lydgate, Gower, Caxton, Pedro Mexia (whose version was translatcd by Thomas Fortescue in 1571), George Turberville's Tragical Tales (1587) and Thomas Beard's The Theatre of God's Judgments (1612). Middleton probably used one of the more recent versions, and Karl Christ, who reviewed them all, came down in favour of Machiavelli's version translated by Thomas Bedingfield in 1595. Dr. Frank Sullivan[46] reached the same conclusion in 1940. Of course, Middleton might have read Machiavelli in the original ; or he might have used a recent English version ; or even perhaps Belleforest's Histoires Tragiques (1571), a regular quarry for Jacobean dramatic plots. That Middleton could read French we know from The Triumphs of Honor and Industry (1617) and Anything for a Quiet Life (ca. 1621), but it may have been an ability acquired later.

It is through the name of Almachildes, "a fantasticall Gentleman," as the manuscript calls him, that we can be reasonably certain as to which version the dramatist used. Two traditions are to be considered in the differing spellings of this name : Bandello explains that he knew two

45. Quellenstudien, pp.26-32.
46. G.E. Bentley, Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 905.

versions, "Elmige" and "Almachilde".[47] Hence Belleforest has "Helmige" and Turberville "Ermigio". Thomas Beard, however, has "Hemichild", and Bedingfield's Florentine History has "Almachilde", as Machiavelli does. If this were not proof enough, the Florentine History lacks a character named "Peredeo", who in the earliest accounts was the deviser of the plan whereby "Hilmichio" carried out the actual murder.[48] This character appears in Belleforest and Turberville, for example, named variously Peredeo and Parradio, and plays interestingly varied rôles. He is missing from The Witch, in which the Duchess, the Rosamund of history, does the plotting single-handed.

Machiavelli's account, which was published in Historie Di Nicolo Macchiavelli by John Wolfe in London (1587), pp.15-17, was faithfully rendered by Thomas Bedingfield in 1595. It is a bare narrative containing details of Alboino's conquests and his marriage to Rosmunda, dwelling momentarily on the feast at Verona during which the Queen was made to drink from "a cup [made] of her fathers hed." In order to revenge this, Rosmunda tricked Almachilde into lying with her instead of his maid, whom he loved, and then blackmailed him with killing the King under the threat of exposure for rape. He therefore murdered Alboino, but finding no favour with the Lombard people in regard to the vacant throne (the murder not being attributed to anyone yet), he and Rosmunda fled to Longino, lieutenant of the Holy Roman Emperor, at Ravenna. There the ruthless Rosmunda poisoned Almachilde, only to perish immediately afterwards by poison poured down her throat from the same cup.

Middleton follows Machiavelli in having no "Peredeo", and no marriage between Almachildes and the Duchess ; since it is not clear from Machiavelli where the royal group is living, Middleton chooses Ravenna. Peredeo, who in most versions is the man trapped through the bed-trick into

47. Cited from Karl Christ, Quellenstudien, p.29.
48. Names from an early account (ca. 670) : details in Christ, Quellenstudien, p.30.

the scheme of murder, after being reluctant to accept any part in it, seems to have been assimilated by Machiavelli into Almachilde. As far as I have been able to discover, Middleton's departures from his source are his own invention. The gradual debasement of Almachilde, from noble young gentleman to a tool of Rosmunda in Machiavelli, and to a coward in Middleton, is truly without parallel in all the other retellings of the history. Middleton exercises a somewhat puritanical control over the relationships found in Machiavelli : the Queen's adultery with Almachilde, hinted at in the Florentine History and elsewhere explicit, is cut, together with any intimacy between the unnamed lady-in-waiting and Almachilde. Middleton may just possibly have known Turberville's poetical account, in which Rosmund says to Parradio in the bedroom "framing" scene : "Parradio doest thou knowe / With whome thou standest here?" "Standest" implies that no imtimacy had taken place, whereas Belleforest's Peredee was in the habit of familiarly enjoying a maid of the Queen's chamber—indeed, she is called a "courtisane"—which naturally made it easier for the young profligate to be trapped. The Parradio of Turberville and the Almachildes of Middleton are innocent young men, we feel. Of course, this increases Rosmunda's virtue a little ; in Belleforest, Helmige is as familiar with the Queen's bedchamber as the King is.

The alterations to the historical characters of Almachilde and Rosmunda destroy the psychological verisimilitude of the play. Almachilde's usual rôle of cupbearer to Alboin not being mentioned in Machiavelli, Middleton did not envision the true picture and made him into an absurd coward who has to appear dangerous at the end because of the secret he bears. The Duchess' trick carries little conviction after we have witnessed Almachildes' utter lack of success with Amoretta (the name of the Duchess' woman in The Witch). Rosmunda is merely a Duchess in the play, degraded in rank doubtless to get rid of offensive associations with the English monarchy. Her cunning is that of Mrs. Low-water ; but she shares a readiness to do evil with her historical predecessor. She is the figure amongst Middleton's

women who bridges the gap between the scheming, sensual City wives and the women of the tragi-comedies who, in addition to pandering to their sexual desires, seek power as well.

The scenes dealing with Italian history are short and peripheral, a fate which does tend to befall history and politics in Middleton's plays. Middleton sets the whole play in Ravenna, since a flight to the Lord Governor at the end is clearly impossible ; the Lord Governor has been living amongst the rest throughout the play, and in any case the Duke and the Duchess have to be in the same place for the reconciliation the tragicomic spirit demands. In I.i. we witness the fateful banquet, at which the Duke causes the Duchess to drink from the skull-cup, but it is not a celebration of victory ; instead it is the wedding-feast of Isabella, the Lord Governor's niece, because in this way Middleton can introduce characters from his subplot. By I.i.96 the Duchess has drunk from her father's skull, and thereafter is fully provided with a revenge motive. The next step is to compel Almachildes to slay the Duke ; the preliminary arrangements are made in II.i. by persuading Amoretta to arrange a meeting between herself and her admirer. But then Middleton felt the motive for revenge was distinctly flimsy, so he added another passage on the Duke's brutal treatment of his wife and mention of a second enforcement to drink from the skull-cup (II.ii.55-63). The relationship between Almachildes and Amoretta, who has a delightful touch of the coquette about her, is treated comically. The charmed love-knot incident is borrowed from Vergil ; I discuss the debt in appendix C because all the material pertaining to the witches is shadowed by the uncertain interrelationship of The Witch and Macbeth.

The confrontation of Almachildes by the Duchess at the appointed rendezvous is dramatised in III.i. ; Almachildes is led in blindfold, and then the Duchess reveals herself with dramatic suddenness. The scene has some excellent touches : Almachildes, blindfold, prattles on to "Amoretta" about the subtleties of reputedly chaste and inexperienced women ; also, ironically, Almachildes'

prepossession with sex is used as the reason why evidence against his having behaved honourably will be credited :

> thy wantonness
> Is at this hour in question 'mongst our women,
> Which will make ill for thee.
> (III.ii.32-34)

At the end Almachildes is promised the love of the Duchess, which Middleton must have added from the information given by Machiavelli about the two fleeing together after the murder had been performed. Almachildes, however, does not murder the Duke, but only maintains that he has. The result is that the nation is up in arms about the coup whereby they are being ruled by a foreigner and a woman. Flight becomes necessary. But where to ? Without the historical Ravenna to flee to, Middleton has to make his Duchess cheat Almachildes and try for safety in the Lord Governor's love. Middleton understood that Longino must have been ruling a different people, for he brings them on to quell the Lombard rioters (IV.i.55-87). The Lord Governor, however, is not infatuated by the Duchess as Longino was by Rosmunda, for although he kisses her in this scene he is deeply suspicious of her grief for the Duke. This is a change Middleton had to make if he was to effect a happy ending ; Almachildes had to be wary of the good fortune he had encountered, and the Lord Governor suspicious of the Duchess' honesty.

Finally, in V.iii., the source had to be left far behind to achieve the comic resolution. The Duchess firmly believes she has poisoned Almachildes, not, though, as according to Machiavelli's account, in which Rosmunda prepares "a cup of wine poisoned, and with her owne hand shee offered the same to Almachilde, comming from a bath hote and thristie", but through the witches' agency, who inexplicably fail her after promising their "power's so firm". The Duke is discovered dead on a couch behind a drawn curtain, whereupon the Duchess pleads to be killed. She is denied, however, because she has yet to answer for adultery. Almachildes enters, with the claim that he has indeed enjoyed the Duchess, but Amoretta repudiates

this wishful thinking by pointing out that it was in reality a hired prostitute he enjoyed for his reward. Then the Duke arises to receive his wife whom he genuinely believes regrets having killed him, and promises to bury her father's skull.

The ending is too preposterous for words : the resurrected Duke thanks his would-be murderer and his would-be adulterous wife for their better qualities ; whilst immediately prior to this the former believes he has committed fornication with the Duke's widow and the latter complacently thinks she has murdered her husband. The Duke is thus made foolishly devoid of perception, Almachildes a whoremaster and the Duchess a procuress and a strumpet by intention. In this one scene Middleton rejects the source and the climax goes to pieces. Sad to relate, it is a difficulty he never really overcame, although this is the most flagrant example of a contrived ending. The Duke and Almachildes should definitely have expired ; and the Lord Governor ought to have rejected the Duchess, so that she might have died, the victim of her own schemes, cursing fickle fortune. Then <u>The Witch</u> might have been a passable tragedy of blood.

Interwoven with this historical matter is another story of a woman who waits in a dark bedchamber for her lover to come—in this case her husband. By way of symmetrical counterpoint, she is the deceived one here, for her husband is replaced by another man.[49] The story, found on pp.184-187 of G.B. Giraldi Cinthio's <u>Hecatommithi, ouero Cento Novelle</u> (1574), is entitled "Vn servo s'innamora della moglie del svo Signore : &, per venire a fine del suo amore, essendo ella del Marito gelosa, le dà ad intendere, ch'egli è per giacersi con vn' altra Giouane : &, con tal froda, di lei si gode ; la Donna auedutasi dello inganno, si vendica dell' oltraggio, &, ella laua la ingiuria riceuuta, col suo sangue, dandosi morte." This is the fourth novel, fourth day. Like the story of Rosmunda, this tale issues in blood and death.

49. First identified by Karl Christ.

Iforomena, not long married, and jealous of her husband Publio, is beloved secretly by Publio's servant. This fellow concocts a story about Publio meeting another woman for their mutual pleasure, and when he learns Publio is to go out of town one day, he tells Iforomena to be prepared to come to a certain house and lie with her husband as the mistress's substitute. He experiences a good deal of trouble in preventing her from intending to say something either before or after to her husband, but he silences her by warning of the duel which would break out between Publio and the other woman's husband if word leaked out, and by promising to substitute Iforomena on every occasion Publio has made an assignation. Cinthio's tale has one ironic feature : the mistress in this case, according to the servant, is the female "Comare", sponsor, or rather protector and guide of the newly wedded couple.

The servant arranges with his female cousin to let in the husband of the woman already in her house on the appointed day, on the pretext that Iforomena wishes to prevent her husband from committing adultery. Since the servant is of a build and appearance with Publio, once he has installed Iforomena in the cousin's house, he slips out and returns muffled as Publio. His pleasure is fulfilled ; all goes well until Iforomena, ready to leave, sees her husband ride by the door on horseback. Feigning an embrace, she closes with the impostor and stabs him, then stabs herself. As the pair die, the neighbours, the mayor and Publio gather to learn the details.

Middleton has got rid of the deaths in the source material and added one himself, the husband's, but to achieve this, he has had to get rid of the fact of adultery. The adultery is avoided, like the Duchess's, by the merest margin : Isabella, Middleton's Iforomena, is bedded in a darkened room in a strange house when the servant, known to his mistress as Celio (but in reality Sebastian, her former fiancé), decides it is a base trick and better left alone. He has other motives for this abstention, however, including a chance of marriage to Isabella, and even though she is already married, she is still

a virgin. In the end he does marry the virgin widow.

This subplot occupies part of I.i. (before the episode of the skull-cup), in which we meet an added character, Florida. She is the courtesan kept by Antonio, Isabella's husband, no doubt put in to give Isabella just cause for jealousy, whereas Iforomena is unconvincingly blind in her suspicions. Florida's original appears in neither of the two sources of the subplot, Giraldi Cinthio or Cyril Tourneur's The Atheist's Tragedy (1611). She is one of Middleton's bold sinners, immoral but sharp-witted ; in the intended adultery scene she does duty as the moral female cousin in Cinthio's tale. The wedding of the story of the adulterous servant from Cinthio to the story of the virgin widow from Tourneur makes for very implausible effects. This subplot continues in II.i., mostly following Tourneur, except that Middleton introduces another pair of characters of his own creation, Francisca and Abberzanes. The Italian tale does not really take over until III.ii.180, where Sebastian, disguised as Celio, introduces the idea of Antonio's adultery to Isabella. Sebastian's name, I should add, is taken from Tourneur's dramatis personae, though Celio does not appear in Cinthio's tale. Isabella at first repudiates Celio's tale as a lie ; Middleton has ennobled Isabella because of the ending to come, in which she justly relinquishes any regrets over the worthless Antonio. But then she agrees to allow Celio to arrange things so that her husband will lie with her instead ; in IV.ii., Fernando, Sebastian's friend, permits the use of his house, having accepted the argument that in spirit Isabella belongs to Sebastian. This is an idea from Tourneur, who depicts two lovers plighted but separated by a false report of the young man's death. The result is that his Castabella marries a man whom she loves rather reservedly.

The plan for the adultery in The Witch is as follows : Fernando is to act as guide to the beguiled Isabella, and Florida is to pretend to be ready to welcome a man, naming Antonio ; Isabella is to get a brief glimpse, and a word from Florida, and thus believe she is about to

be intimate with her husband. Florida is drawn into the scheme on the promise that her reward will be a night with Antonio, a night of which she is deceived. This is certainly a clumsy piece of machinery to surmount the unacceptable credulity of Iforomena, and to avoid an adulterous offstage episode.

Isabella arrives (IV.ii.67), and is told that her husband is asleep in a dark chamber. This is the last point at which Middleton follows Cinthio ; for Sebastian feels pangs of regret, and invokes his religious beliefs as a veto against such treachery :

> There's more religion in my love than so.
> It is not treacherous lust that gives content
> T'an honest mind ; and this could prove no better.
> Were it in me a part of manly justice ... ?
> (IV.ii.96-99)

To do Middleton credit, Sebastian has used religious imagery fairly consistently, especially when trying to justify his decision to consummate his "marriage in heaven" with Isabella (IV.ii.6-20). So Isabella sleeps chaste after all.

But the end of the debt to Cinthio is not the end of the subplot. It is hopelessly complicated by the Tourneur borrowing and by the added characters Francisca and Abberzanes, and it surely proved impossible to follow on stage. The Atheist's Tragedy, printed 1611, was "completed very soon before its entry in the Stationers' Register on 14 September of that year,"[50] and it supplied Middleton with the part of the subplot concerning the unconsummated marriage of Isabella and Antonio. The originals of this couple are Charlemont and Castabella, an affianced and chaste pair of lovers at the beginning of Tourneur's play. Charlemont, however, is early persuaded by his uncle, D'Amville, to go away to the war to win honour (I.i.). Not long after he has gone, D'Amville forces a match between Rousard, his son, who is sick and in

50. The Atheist's Tragedy, ed. Irving Ribner (London, 1964), p.xxv.

frail health, and Castabella. Borachio, D'Amville's henchman, brings false tidings of Charlemont's death on the field of battle, in a very famous passage (II.i.40-94). When Charlemont does return (III.i.), he can do nothing save exclaim against incontinent womankind, until he learns Rousard is too sick to have consummated the marriage. When occasion later arises for embraces to be exchanged between Charlemont and Castabella (in the graveyard scene in IV.iii.), Castabella remains as "clear as chastity". Rousard's sickness proves mortal in V.i., and after Charlemont has been acquitted of Borachio's murder, he is free to marry Castabella.

The Cinthio tale, it will be seen, has been inset into Tourneur's plot. Middleton perhaps intended to develop the Lord Governor of Ravenna along the lines of D'Amville, for in I.i. Sebastian complains that by following the war for three years, he has lost his bride-to-be, Isabella. In this scene Isabella calls her unscrupulous uncle, the Lord Governor, "the devil in a sheepskin", for having arranged a swift marriage between herself and Antonio, even though she does not "over-love" him (I.i.14). But we hear no more about her uncle's wickedness; indeed, he is virtuous enough to resist the lecherous Duchess later. Castabella's unwillingness to marry is transferred to Isabella, who forgets about it until Sebastian re-appears in his own guise. At II.i. the Cinthio tale takes over when Sebastian is employed as the servant Celio.

Where, then, do the witches come into all this ? Isabella is still a virgin because Sebastian has persuaded the witches in I.ii. to "strike barrenness in man", and a comic scene ensues in which Antonio, the morning after his nuptials, enters, frustrated, to try various restoratives (II.i.). As a servant, of course, Sebastian is in a position to discover that Antonio has a whore. Florida is necessary to render Antonio's death acceptable, although why he should want a whore when he is so desperately jealous about Isabella is a subtlety of characterisation nowhere brought out in any speech. As if this were not enough, Francisca, a vicious juvenile

delinquent, hates Isabella because Isabella knows she has had a bastard by Abberzanes ; thus she has a motive for betraying her sister-in-law to Antonio. Francisca conceives a scheme to defame Isabella by making it appear that adultery has just taken place between Isabella and Gasparo, a servant. To this end she has alerted Antonio to make a surprise return home in the night. He enters wildly, runs upon Isabella's chamber and meets the half-dressed Gasparo whom Francisca has just roused. Antonio stabs him in fury, pursues the retreating man, and stabs his bed-fellow (IV.iii.40). We recall that Isabella had gone to Fernando's house, but we are treated to part of a scene wherein we are to imagine that Antonio has killed his wife. Francisca becomes alarmed and confesses her sins, whereupon Antonio forces the depraved pair, Francisca and Abberzanes, to marry at swordpoint. Gasparo's bedfellow, who is not dead, turns out to be Florida. She, of course, knows Isabella's whereabouts, and Antonio goes rushing off again in the hope that he may still entrap his wife in adultery. Two scenes later (V.iii.)—and I rank this as the feeblest device in any play by Middleton—we learn that Antonio has fallen sixty fathoms to his death through a trapdoor at Fernando's house. Middleton was forced to kill a husband modelled on Rousard, as he could have foreseen, to set the wife free to marry. Any device—a violent quarrelsomeness, perhaps—would have occurred to Middleton had he not written with such haste as he evidently did. A further untidy end occurs when Sebastian, explaining his behaviour, refers to the locus of the action as "Urbino" (V.iii.54).

The witches feature in three scenes, but only the first one (I.ii.) is strictly relevant. This one accounts for Antonio's impotence[51]; it opens with a Hecate who quotes from Reginald

51. The charm takes the form of serpent skins to be hidden in the married couple's house. Scot mentions that such skins are said to procure barrenness (Bk.XII, chap.XV), but Middleton surely has added their power to remove desires.

Scot's Discouerie of Witchcraft (1584) :

> Titty and Tiffin, Suckin and Pidgen, Liard and Robin ! White spirits, black spirits, grey spirits, red spirits ! Devil toad, devil-ram, devil-cat, and devil-dam ! why, Hoppo and Stadlin, Hellwain and Puckle !

Middleton had open before him the thirty-third chapter of the seventeenth book of the Discouerie, which begins :

> Now, how Brian Darcies he spirits and shee spirits, Tittie and Tiffin, Suckin and Pidgin, Liard and Robin, &c : his white spirits and blacke spirits, graie spirits and red spirits, diuell tode and diuell lambe, diuels cat and diuels dam, agree herewithall, or can stand consonant with the word of GOD, or true philosophie, let heauen and earth iudge.
>
> (p.542)

The ultimate source of the familiars' names is W.W.'s A true and iust Recorde, of the Information, Examination and Confession of all the Witches, taken at S. Oses (1582), but, since the names of Middleton's witches are Scot's (Bk.XII, chap.V), there is no need to go behind his book ; Hellwain and Puckle are not really witches, but are personified from a truly impressive list of spirits, apparitions, nymphs, fairies and flying objects (Bk.VII, chap.XV). The Christian scepticism in Scot leaves its mark on Sebastian's use of the witches' power :

> Heaven knows with what unwillingness and hate
> I enter this damn'd place.
>
> (I.ii.107)

Just before Sebastian arrives, we witness a typical spell-brewing episode in which a preparation is being made which will enable the witches to fly through the air. This comes from book ten, chapter eight of the Discouerie, originally two Giambattista della Porta recipes from book two of his Magiae Naturalis (1558), found in the section

headed "Lamiarum vnguenta". Middleton, however, used only Scot, although he may have known the kind of thing Della Porta's book contained— such medicines "Mulier an casta sit experiri." Ben Jonson's Masque of Queens (1609), which has been mistakenly assumed to be Middleton's source for the witches, has a reference to anointing for flight, with a note crediting Della Porta. Hecate passes the dead body of a child to Stadlin to add to the other ingredients :

> There, take this unbaptized brat ;
> Boil it well, preserve the fat :
> You know 'tis precious to transfer
> Our 'nointed flesh into the air,
> In moonlight nights, o'er steeple-tops
> Mountains, and pine-trees....
> (I.i.14-19)

It is worth saying here that this scene somewhat damages J.M. Nosworthy's[52] point that Middleton's Hecate never speaks octosyllabic couplets as the Hecate of Macbeth does ; it seems very possible that the author of the above lines wrote :

> Upon the corner of the moon
> There hangs a vap'rous drop profound ;
> I'll catch it ere it come to ground....
> (Macbeth, III.v.23-25)

But if Middleton did interpolate his own songs into Macbeth, the level of the play's artistry elevated his touch. Much of the witch business in his own play is offensive in the extreme. Firestone, Hecate's son, wishes to cohabit with a parson's daughter whilst in the form of an incubus, but his mother objects that there will be no-one to lie with her. This kind of sexual fantasy does nothing to clear modern doubts about Middleton's psychological balance.

In I.ii. the witches help Almachildes with a charmed ribbon, which causes the recipient to feel instantaneous affection for the giver. In this scene and in III.iii. the witches' spells

52. "The Hecate scenes in Macbeth," RES, XXIV (1948), 138.

are effective, but the final witch scene (V.ii.) shares the signs of haste which the whole denouement bears. Hecate satisfies the Duchess of her powers by quoting Ovid, Metamorphoses VII, ll.199ff. Alexander Dyce therefore believed that, since a line is lacking just as in Bodinus' De Magorum Daemonomania, bk. II, chap. II, p.230, Middleton had looked beyond Scot. But there is no need to assume this ; another line is misquoted, following Scot's "Teque luna traho" (Bk.XII, Chap.VII) and not Bodinus' correct version "Te quoque luna traho". The charm to kill Almachildes is finally prepared, but it does not seem to have any effect. It is made in a caldron and brewed with vermin, reptiles and human appendages. The scene[53] is certainly like the one in Macbeth (IV.i.39-43) ; Middleton's imagination may have been assisted here by Jaspar Isac's engraving (ca. 1613) of The Abomination of the Sorcerers, showing a cauldron with horrid malformed creatures in it boiling over a fire.

It strikes one, no doubt, as very strange that a man should interweave four such disparate strands of material together with no small skill and yet botch his plotting with frequent carelessness. Haste and uncertainty must extenuate Middleton's faults on this occasion, for it is possible to discern an intention to juxtapose two parallel and contrasting stories. Further, the introduction of poison, drugs and charms cannot be said to contribute to the illusion of rational motivation. Yet the play has a darker atmosphere about it than any earlier one ; and it contains Middleton's first death of an evil character to secure a happy ending. Samuel Schoenbaum[54] points

53. I have assumed, perhaps unwarrantably, that Middleton's play is really behind the Hecate scenes of Macbeth. Scholars are not agreed. J.P. Cutts in SQ, VII (1956), 203-209, proves that the two songs "Come away Hecate" and "Black spirits and white" were certainly in The Witch first. He believes Middleton worked them into Macbeth. J.M Nosworthy, whose article I have mentioned, and Richard Flatter, in Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XCIII (1957), 196-210, oppose the view that Middleton touched up Macbeth. Their cases are weak. One must, I submit, avoid thinking of Macbeth's witches as a source for Middleton's witches. This rather invites one to see the matter the other way around.

54. "Middleton's Tragicomedies," MP, LIV (1956), 10.

to the cowardly fop Abberzanes and the vicious Francisca, apparently Middleton's creations, as evidence of his darkening mood :

> Middleton's treatment of them is too mirthless and unsocial for comedy. He feels impelled to convey what is permanently despicable about the human animal, and neither comedy nor tragedy would quite suit his purpose—hence the middle mood of this play, in which one senses ... the gathering darkness of Middleton's later drama.
>
> The play is a failure, clearly ; yet it achieves a characterisation, especially of women like the Duchess and Francisca, altogether new. Perhaps it also proved to Middleton that he had no real feeling for the weird, the supernatural and the frightening world of insubstantial things.

SOURCES

Main Plot : Niccolo Machiavelli, The Florentine History, trans. Thomas Bedingfield (1595).

Subplot : G.B. Giraldi Cinthio, Hecatommithi (1574), IV.4[55] ; Cyril Tourneur, The Atheist's Tragedy (1611).

Witches[56] : Reginald Scot, The Discouerie of Witchcraft (1584) ; Virgil, Eclogues VIII.

55. I should add that Gabriel Chappuys translated this tale into French in 1583.
56. The full debt to Scot is traced in Karl Christ, Quellenstudien, pp.32-34 ; Scot's Discouerie, ed. Brinsley Nicholson (London, 1886), pp.543-552 ; in vol.V of Bullen's edition, footnotes to I.ii., III.iii., and V.ii.

CHAPTER FIVE

Italianate Tragicomedies of Deceit

After The Roaring Girl, as we have seen, Middleton began to rely more and more upon Italian plays and tales for incidents and plots. Yet these affected his characterisation in gradual shifts of emphasis only, since we have to take into account the far greater influence of the adult actors on Middleton's plays after 1608. This influence especially affects female rôles. Nevertheless, one can trace an almost unbroken line of development of certain character-types until one reaches a play in which a major study of that type is achieved. This line of development continues even through the three distinctive phases of Middleton's literary interest—English (to 1608), Italian (to 1621), and Spanish, the last phase, during which Middleton stopped writing altogether.

A figure like the domineering female, who first appears as Wisdom in The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased, reaches a culminating portrait in Moll Cutpurse, the virtuous virago of The Roaring Girl. I have hinted that Middleton was also preoccupied with two other kinds of female figure, related to the line which is represented most fully by Moll. The first is the assertive woman who uses deceit and sexual attraction to bring men under her control, exemplified by Mrs. Harebrain in A Mad World; but in this line the later studies of Eugenia and Beatrice-Joanna are obviously more representative. The second is the widow, often young, rich and sexually attractive. In an age in which marrying the widow of one's master was a well-known way to success, but in which men praised a wife for fidelity to a dead husband, there was obviously a good deal of rather ambivalent interest attaching to these women. In his next plays Middleton portrays three widows : Valeria, Lady Ager and the Duchess of Milan. All of them show the weakness so vigorously castigated by Fidelio in The Phoenix, and the latter two learn, like Castiza, serious moral lessons. Lady Ager too easily casts away her dead husband's honour for her son, and the Duchess her vow to her deceased spouse.

The Widow is not as serious as these two plays, for the young widow falls prey, contentedly enough, to a fortune-hunter. The play is, indeed, a comedy, in contrast with the other three I am treating in this group ; and it is not all Middleton's, apparently, for Jonson's and Fletcher's names also appear on the title-page of the 1652 (first) quarto. However, scholars so far have been unable to decide what can be given to Fletcher or Jonson, and at the most have allowed some revision to Fletcher and the plotting to Jonson.[1] One cannot easily quarrel with this view, since the dialogue reads throughout like Middleton ; the plotting shows Middleton's interests now and again, but would not be untypical of Fletcher. One might point to the scene I.ii., in which Francisco and Ricardo conduct a mock wooing-scene after the manner of Orlando and Rosalind, as Fletcherian in its unwholesome savour. On the whole, though, there are remarkably few signs of a division of labour or interests.

The date of the play is probably 1616, as an allusion to Mrs. Turner, one of the accused in the Overbury murder case of 1615, is to be found in V.i.[2] She was hanged in November 1615, and the allusion would perhaps be valid for about a year. The Prologue makes reference to a Christmas production, and so points to Christmas 1615 or 1616. But The Widow seems to depend for one of its jests on The Honest Lawyer (printed 1616) ; I shall mention this jest later. In the meantime it is not unreasonable to suppose the play was first acted in 1616.

The play's action is woven around three women, a virgin, a wife and a widow, called Martia, Philippa and Valeria. The plots involving the widow and the wife are taken from Boccaccio's Decameron, but the virgin's adventures are only partly reconstructible from a number of sources. To the use of Boccaccio we may attribute some of the play's rather moderate success : "Of explanation of motives, of development of character,

1. See. R.H. Barker, Thomas Middleton, pp.81-82, for a review of different opinions.
2. See G.E. Bentley, The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 902.

of ethical intention, as in the drama and the novel, the novella has none."3 Middleton, of course, adapted other novelle with more success later, but not Boccaccio's.

The wanton wife's adventures begin first in I.i., where we learn that she is part of a household comprising Brandino, a justice and husband to Philippa, Martino, Brandino's clerk, and Violetta, maid and confidante to Violetta. Martino possesses a litigious humour rather like that of Tangle in The Phoenix. Philippa is being courted by Francisco, a young gallant who invents various legal causes to obtain access to the Brandino household. However, he is content merely to look upon Philippa without pursuing his desires, whereas she actively wishes to arrange an assignation. At this point Middleton begins to draw on his source, the third novel of the third day of the Decameron, a tale of a married lady who is in love with a young man and who, under pretence of confession and purity of conscience, deceives a good but naïve friar into arranging the complete satisfaction of her pleasure. This story existed in at least four English adaptations by the time of Middleton's play, and perhaps the only safe policy is to assume that Middleton was thoroughly acquainted with it either in Italian or through one or more of the English versions. It is found in R.C.'s A World of Wonders (1607), itself a translation of Henri Estiene's L'Introduction au traits de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes. Ou, traité preparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote (1566). This version is very close to Boccaccio : the only changes in detail are that the woman's home is transferred from Florence to Orleans, and that the number of occasions on which the wife reports the misdemeanors of the young man to the priest is cut from three to one. In Boccaccio's tale, an unnamed lady falls for a young man without finding any way to tell him of her love. She is married to a wool-merchant, whom she despises. She goes to her con-

3. Mary Augusta Scott, The Italian Novella (South Sewanee, Tennessee, 1911), p.7.

fessor and tells him she is being besieged by a handsome young man. The confessor promises to take the matter up with the young man, a friend of his. The young man is surprised at first, but quickly guesses the meaning of the accusation ; so the wife goes agin to the confessor, claiming that a purse and girdle have been sent to the house by him. These are handed to the young man later by way of returning an affront, but are actually an encouraging gift. Finally the wife goes to the confessor a third time, at a time when her husband must go to Genoa on business, to tell him that the young man climbed a tree in her garden and nearly got into the bedroom. After he is upbraided with it, the young man follows this plan and enjoys the wife without further resort to the confessor.

R.C., following Estiene, has the lady report the tree-climbing incident only (p.110), and barely mentions the husband ; he adds the detail of the confessor's discovery that he has been made a go-between. Miss M.A. Scott[4] finds that three Jacobean plays use the Boccaccio tale in some way : Marston's The Fawn (1606), Sharpham's The Fleire (1607), and Jonson's The Devil is an Ass (1616); but she does not mention The Widow. However, the connection between the third tale of the third day of Boccaccio and The Widow was known to Koeppel and Baxmann.[5] Sharpham's The Fleire is very closely modelled on The Fawn, but it does not utilise the story from Boccaccio, as Miss Scott asserts.

Marston's use of the story is closest to Boccaccio, and is not so curtailed as Estiene's. Dulcimell, an unmarried girl, falls in love with Tiberio when he comes to plead his father's suit to her. The man she has thus to deceive is her

4. M.A. Scott, Elizabethan Translations from the Italian, p.94.
5. Emil Koeppel, Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen Ben Jonson's, John Marston's und Beaumont und Fletcher's, in Münchener Beiträge zur Romanischen und Englischen Philologie, XI Heft, (Erlangen and Leipzig, 1895), 64; E. Baxmann, Middleton's Lustspiel "The Widow" und Boccaccio's "Il Decamerone" III,3 und II,2 (Halle, 1904).

own father, Gonzago, "A weake Lord of a selfe admiring wisedome." Dulcimell has a maid to assist her plans, Philocalia. In II.i. Dulcimell relates how the prince Tiberio is suing to her on his own behalf, and Gonzago taxes Tiberio with this behaviour at once. Tiberio is puzzled by the charge. In III.i. Dulcimell then claims that Tiberio has left a scarf as a present, and written lines to her ; Tiberio is again warned, and accepts the scarf as if it were being returned to him. This time, by interpreting the lines written, he grasps the girl's purpose. In IV.i., Dulcimell comes in haste to her father, and tells him that Tiberio has proposed climbing into her chamber by a plane-tree and meeting her with a priest who will marry them. He intends to do the deed that night, she adds. Gonzago advises Tiberio to forget the whole thing, as he knows the plans down to the minutest details, which he divulges to prove his daughter's forthrightness. In the act-time between acts four and five, Tiberio follows out the plan and we meet the couple, married, at the end of act five.

Marston, then, has kept to the three episodes in the courtship of the young man by the lady ; he has introduced a letter ; and he has given the whole deception a comic tone and an honourable ending. In R.C., the episode was part of a section inveighing against women's incontinence and unscrupulousness.

Jonson merely flirts with the motif in The Devil is an Ass, yet it must be remembered he wrote his play in 1616 too. He uses the tale in II.ii. of his play, where Pug, the puny devil, is made unwitting go-between for Mrs. Fitzdottrel and Wittipol. She tells Pug exactly how she must not be courted, from window to window across Lincoln's Inn, and bids him report as much to Wittipol. Here, we are back to the husband and wife situation again, but otherwise little is added or changed. Middleton's use of the story implies a knowledge of Marston and some version of Boccaccio, whereas Marston almost certainly went direct to Boccaccio in the Italian.[6]

6. See A. Caputi, John Marston, Satirist, p.204.

Violetta and Philippa are the pair of humorous women who parallel Marston's pair. All the other versions have only one woman active on her own behalf. These two, in I.i., let fall a letter just after Francisco has been in the house, and Martino picks it up. Francisco's interest in the wife prior to encouragement is novel in Middleton. The letter is in praise of Philippa, and she feigns anger at receiving such an impudent affront and aspersion on her honour. Martino refers the matter to Brandino, Philippa's foolish old husband ; thus, as with Boccaccio and Jonson, adultery is at stake for success. However, the idea of using a letter to be flung accusingly at the suitor is Marston's.

Typical twists of plot which amount to a complete reworking of Boccaccio's version are now introduced. Middleton makes Philippa boldly accuse Martino as a consenting go-between, to illustrate the impudence of this type of frustrated woman and her complete ability to manipulate the men around her. She has a distinctive kind of desire which needs a man who is witty as well as a handsome lover to satisfy it, and the letter is actually a kind of ingenuity test. Middleton's Philippa is not in love with the handsome young man, but in sexual and psychological need of his attributes (I.i.88-94).

Like R.C., Middleton has only one message by the wife to the favoured young man, containing a definite assignation : "at the back gate, between nine and ten this night" (I.i.214-215). Brandino will be away at this time. Unlike R.C., however, Middleton makes the husband the actual go-between, presumably to add to his foolishness and lessen the effect of adultery in a comedy. In I.ii. the charge of attempted cuckolding is brought by Brandino and Martino against Francisco, who we learn is the son of Brandino's now-dead best friend. Francisco swiftly apprehends the situation and untruthfully admits that he did send the letter, but that he only did it to test the wife's constancy, as a good turn to his father's best friend. This lie is really a critical misjudgment on Middleton's part, because it instantly causes us to react unfavourably to the hero. Gull-

ing we accept ; lying openly, we do not. As a result of this claim, Francisco is welcomed to Brandino's house, to visit it as freely as he wishes ; this occurs at the end of act one, and we hear no more of this plot until II.ii.

In II.ii., we meet Francisco on his way to Philippa's house, but before he can get very far, he is arrested. The action involving the widow, Valeria, and Ricardo, her suitor, at this point crosses the Francisco-Philippa action ; in the former, Ricardo has attempted to entrap Valeria into a premature decision to marry him by concealing witnesses, Francisco and Attilio,[7] to overhear an informal conversation. Valeria has responded to this trap by alleging unlawful entrance on to her premises. Much of this legal business concerning the widow seems to be Middleton's invention, as far as present knowledge of his sources goes, although it seems just the sort of case Middleton's mother might have got involved in. When Francisco finally does reach Philippa's house, in III.ii., after encountering thieves and overcoming them, he is very late indeed, bleeding, and beginning to feel a kind of remorseful apprehension at the significance of the crosses he has experienced. In the end, frightened by a girl in a white shirt whom he assumes to be a ghost, he leaves without even informing Philippa of his arrival.

The unsuccessful conclusion of the affair does not reflect any source, since Francisco is not a Wittipol ; his moral sensibility about sex and illicit relationships prevents him from maintaining a consistent attitude towards his desires. In the course of two long speeches (III.ii.60-81 and 85-118), the change of conscience is wrought, perhaps representing a better reworking of the Penitent Brothel repentance in A Mad World My Masters. In that subplot, Penitent Brothel regretted his adultery with Mistress Harebrain after witnessing a succubus manifestation of the lady. Here Francisco sees a figure he takes to be a projec-

7. Attilio is the name of a principal character in Della Porta's La Sorella, source of No Wit.

tion of his own sin :

> ... it is made strong against me
> By my ill purpose ; for 'tis man's own sin
> That puts on armour upon all his evils....
> (III.ii.88-90)

A marked advance in tone is discernible, however : Francisco is far more realistic about his position and his infatuation than Penitent Brothel. He is nobler in his refutation of lechery, somewhat like Fiorentino's Galgano, who refused Minoccia's embraces when he had successfully courted her, out of respect to her husband (Painter, Pallace of Pleasure [1566], I.xlvij). It is at this very point that Middleton begins to follow the other source from Boccaccio, the second tale of the second day. William Painter in his Pallace of Pleasure translates this story with some modifications ; it is the "xxxiij Nouell" of the first volume, entitled "Rinaldo of Esti beinge robbed, arriued at Castell Guglielmo and was succoured of a widowe : and restored of his losses, returninge saufe and sounde home to his owne house." The idea of the widow Valeria presumably came to Middleton from this tale, although the widow in the story of Rinaldo is equivalent to the Philippa of the play. It is a fanciful story involving a fantasy projection of Boccaccio's imagination : an attractive widow entertains in style a man beset by ill fortune, and her hospitality includes a night spent with her in bed. In the morning, the man, Rinaldo, is given money and goes away without any involvement or obligation on his hands. The reason for the widow's behaviour is that she has been expecting her lover, the Marchese Azzo da Ferrara, to join her for the night, but has been disappointed of his coming. When Rinaldo, who has been stripped in a robbery which deprived him of money, servant and horse, puts on the deceased husband's clothes, her feelings grow too strong to be contained. Boccaccio tells the story of the robbery, the lucky admittance into the widow's house, the delights and luxuries of the evening, the pleasures in bed, and the restoration to fortune in the

morning with an indulgent humour, knowing the whole episode to be so pleasant a daydream that he need not dwell on the sensual satisfaction present. William Painter, the English moralist, can only follow his original so far before becoming thoroughly indignant at the pair's lechery. As he reaches the climax (fol.67b), when the two have aroused each other's desires, he cuts short his narrative as abruptly as a modern film censor :

> He was a goodlie personage, faier and pleasaunte to beholde, yonge and of good behauiour, vpon whom the woman many tymes did caste her eyes, and liked him well. To be shorte, this lecherous ladie, burnyng inwardlie with amourous desire, abused her self with hym, in steede of the Marques.

The cut represents about twenty-seven lines of Boccaccio's text, and also an alteration of the whole tone of the story. Middleton also cuts out any lechery in his adaptation, in a different way and for a different reason. His Rinaldo is, in fact, a woman, Martia. She has run away from home because her father (the first suitor to Valeria) wished to marry her to a wealthy but ageing gentleman (II.i.161-163). In III.i. she appears, disguised as a man, journeying through the countryside in the company of a friendly ballad-singer, actually an Autolycus-like rogue and thief. Latrocinio has a whole repertoire of bawdy ballads, but his payment is demanded more crudely than Autolycus'—by direct force. As The Widow was originally played at the Blackfriars private theatre,[8] by the King's men, the demand for musical opportunities would be impressed on Middleton. In the space of the first eighty lines of III.i. there are no less than four songs called for. Hence the parallel with the singing Autolycus is perhaps accidental, as Latrocinio and his fellow thieves and confidence tricksters owe much more to Boccaccio, and to the group of thieves in The Honest Lawyer (1616). Martia is robbed of horse, money and clothes (except a

8. But see also E.H.C. Oliphant, The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, p.497, for a different, though unconvincing, theory.

shirt), just as Rinaldo is. The confidence trick in each case is different, but it involves accompanying the dupe until a safe point to rob him has been reached. Rinaldo walks a long way to Castel Guglielmo, and shelters outside the widow's house, whereas Martia is represented as being robbed fairly near Philippa's house. This is to make it probable that Francisco will have encountered the same thieves, and been further delayed. Martia, in her shirt, scares away Francisco, as noted, and knocks for succour ; Violetta pulls her in without any misgiving that it may not be Francisco. It is quickly discovered that the gentleman is not the expected one, but handsomer and hence more welcome. The business of the husband's clothes now follows, but it is considerably modified from Boccaccio's treatment ; there it was used merely to justify the arousal of the widow's marital desires, in seeing a reincarnation of her dead husband. Violetta first takes Martia to put on a suit of Brandino's, and the first Philippa sees of her (she is, of course, still believed to be a man, named Ansaldo), she appears as a rejuvenated husband :

> Why, trust me, here's my husband young again !
> It is no sin to welcome you, sweet gentleman.
> (III.iii.168-169)

The suit is an old and particularly ill-made one, so that through it a certain sympathy is created for the young wife who would commit adultery ; this person in the husband's apparel is only her fair due. However, the adultery which Painter had condemned is avoided, as dawn has now arrived ; Marita accepts a loan as Rinaldo did to help with expenses, gives a promise to return soon, and departs. But the clothes she is wearing are the means which cause her arrest and guarantee she is brought back to Philippa's house. The transvestite theme here is witty and partly designed to forward the plot, but it is not until the play has completely departed from the source that the more recherché aspects of Martia's situation can be explored. Martia returns to Philippa's house as a result of a device to free

her, probably borrowed from Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair (1614), IV.i. C.R. Baskervill[9] notes that Justice Overdo "in one of his foolish impulses, gives Quarlous his hand and seal to an unfilled warrant (V.ii.), which Quarlous uses to release Mistress Grace from the power of her guardian, Overdo himself, at the same time forcing her to pay him for this good deed. So Justice Brandino, when he cannot pay the quack, gives him his hand and seal, which are used to release from prison a fellow rogue and Martia, who has been committed by the justice ; while the quack gets in recompense for his charity all the money that Martia has" (p.19).

Of Latrocinio's rôle as a quack more remains to be said. Martia, still as Ansaldo, comes back in Brandino's clothes, and Philippa suggests that Violetta dress Ansaldo up in her (Philippa's) clothes. Philippa rather enjoys the idea of having her lover dressed in her own clothes living unsuspected in her household, and comments "I've heard o' the like" (V.i.87) : the situation she had heard of involved a gentleman who dressed as the waiting-woman to a widow, and under this guise carried on a satisfactory, if piquant, affair. In Nathan Field's Amends For Ladies (ca. 1610-11), a character named Bold does this very thing (III.iii. and IV.i.), and marries the widow in the end, as Philippa mentions in her account. W. Carew Hazlitt[10] says the incident of Bold and the widow "was taken from an incident well known about the date when the play was written, and referred to in it." This particular part of the plot, if Hazlitt can be relied upon, gives further instance of Middleton's readiness to use topical material as in his City comedies. However, we, the audience, know that Philippa is not really harbouring a lover dressed as a woman, but at the same time the inverted relationship implied occurs only to us. This spurious kind of titillation is exactly that quality critics have labelled Fletcherian. More of the

9. "Some Parallels to Bartholomew Fair," MP, VI (1908-09), 118-119.
10. A Select Collection of Old English Plays, originally published by ... Dodsley, new notes by W. Carew Hazlitt (London, 1875), XI, 20.

same kind of rather overblown excitation follows : at V.i.141 Martia enters as a woman, and Philippa, who believes her to be a man in disguise, incites the men to admire her physical charms. She and Violetta are quite delighted to watch Francisco falling in love with the girl-man. It all sounds rather like the "ingling Pyander" satire of Micro-cynicon over again, as if Middleton himself remained fascinated by the presumed spectacle of changeable sexual identity. The two women determine to allow Ansaldo and Francisco to be married for revenge on Francisco. The pair marry, and, to the chagrin of Philippa and Violetta, Ansaldo is recognised by the First Suitor as Martia, and thereupon she receives the blessing and fortune of her father. At this point we learn that the thieves have been taken ; Middleton is following the conclusion to Boccaccio's tale of Rinaldo, and as in that tale, full restoration is made to those characters who have been robbed.

The group of robbers who appear in III.i—Latrocinio, Occulto, Silvio, Strato, Fiducio and others—may be derived from a play called The Honest Lawyer (1616), by S.S., perhaps S. Simson.[11] This play is assigned a date of ca. 1614-15 by Schoenbaum's Annals, and if it does precede The Widow it is certainly a source. If not, then it uses The Widow. One piece of evidence not formerly noticed is that given by Nice, a character who is very superstitious and consults his almanac before committing himself to anything :

> Iune, Iuly, August, September—the first day— ... Let's see ... The fourteenth day—bad. I must do no deed of charitie to day ; I haue president for it. 't is lost.
> (E2^{v})[12]

The fourteenth of September was "evil" in 1615

11. See W. Carew Hazlitt, A Manual for the Collector and Amateur of Old English Plays (London, 1892), p.108.
12. Nice alludes to this day again on E2^{v}, and gives the invented tag, Bretnor-style, "A good turne forgotten", and on E3 calls the fourteenth an "evil day indeed." The motto appears in The Widow at V.i.213.

("More then desperat," said Bretnor), but not in 1616, which points to a date of composition in that year, whereas The Widow has an allusion, as we have seen, which implies that it could scarcely have been finished before the New Year. It may well be that the copy of 1616 was before Middleton as he read the following joke of Valentine's :

> Me thinks—a little Gun-powder
> Should haue some strange relation to this fit.
> [i.e. the stone, which Gripe has so severely
> that he cannot pass water at all.]
> I haue seene Gun-powder oft driue out stones
> From Forts and Castle-walls, huger then he
> Has any in his reynes or bladder, sure.
> ... Ile giue him charge enough : some Aquavitae
> First brewd together would allay it well.
> (F2)

which he transcribed for his own quacksalving doctor :

> Le' me see,
> I'll send him a whole musket-charge of gunpowder.
> ... It is the likeliest thing I know to do't ;
> I'm sure it breaks stone-walls and castles down ;
> I see no reason but't should break the stone.
> (IV.ii.10-16)

Middleton's is the simplified form of the jest, and as The Honest Lawyer was entered on the Stationers' Register by 14 August 1615, it is a fair assumption that Middleton was the debtor. As I have noted, the robbers are probably derived from Simson's play. Curfew, Valentine and Vaster all join together to hold up people on the highway, and Valentine's side activity is quack physician, in which he proposes monstrous cures. In addition there is Vaster's wife, believed by herself to be a widow, who is beset by various suitors as Valeria is. It is, however, reasonable to assume that only the gulling of the ridiculous old man, Gripe, by a robber turned physician, furnished material to Middleton. Valentine drives a nail through Gripe's gouty

toe (this is a comedy) and as the old usurer sits racked with pain, "he takes away his purse with his keis" and "exit" ($B3^V$). Likewise Brandino, portrayed throughout as a stupid and inept old man, endures a worthless eye-lotion, compounded of conduit-water and mother's milk, whilst his pocket is picked (IV.ii.).

The quacksalving and gulling in act IV of The Widow has naturally given rise to the speculation that Jonson had a hand here if anywhere, especially as C.R. Baskervill[13] found a parallel between the end of IV.ii. and Cokes and Waspe of Bartholomew Fair (V.iii.). In that scene Waspe finds, after much censure of Cokes for losing his purse twice, that he too has been robbed. Yet the very fact of imitation would seem to argue against the same author's writing both pieces. Baskervill went further, and traced the purse-stealing scene in Latrocinio's mock surgery back to George Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra (1578). In I.V.5, Rosko washes Grimbal's eyes and scales his teeth, just as Latrocinio applies the eye-cup to Brandino and Occulto draws Martino's tooth. It goes without saying that his purse is picked, and when Grimbal realises it, Rosko places the blame on Rowke, an accomplice who has departed. Grimbal is too sick after the treatment he has had to follow up the thief, just as Brandino and Martino appear to be. Latrocinio blames Ansaldo, who was present before the treatment began, for the theft of Brandino's purse. However, Rowke and Rosko are in league, whereas Latrocinio and Ansaldo are not ; the resemblance is perhaps more coincidental than the result of relationship.

The result of a source-study of this play is disappointing in its half-explanatory conclusions. For it is, as R.H. Barker[14] says, almost "a really distinguished comedy [made] out of conventional romantic material." One feels that, as in the case of No Wit Like a Woman's, there was a careful selection of Italianate

13. "Some Parallels to Bartholomew Fair," p.127.
14. Thomas Middleton, p.88.

material for most of this intricately plotted comedy before it was begun. The incident in which two witnesses are concealed behind a curtain, to secure evidence of a promise, must doubtless have a number of analogies in tales and dramas of the Italian Renaissance.

Valeria, Ricardo and the two suitors belong to a part of the action not organic to the rest ; Valeria is therefore made a relative of Philippa, Ricardo a friend of Francisco, and the First Suitor father to Martia, to give some semblance of oneness with the main action. In fact this part of the play might well have been plotted by Fletcher. The characterisation of the Second Suitor is so arbitrary most of the time that one can scarcely imagine Middleton giving assent to it. This suitor keeps repeating the catch-phrase "I have enough, and I will have my humour" (fifteen times), to justify loyalty to the widow, then support of Ricardo, and finally sheer sowing of discord. Perhaps he is a late version of Tangle, the law-wrangler, who was partly mad, in The Phoenix. The widow herself is a source of ruin and frustration to three men, and Ricardo's pure sensuality when he wins her is undoubtedly a reflection of the way in which she has been treated as a sexually-satisfying property in the game of cash-and-property chequers. A sacrifice early in the game, such as Ricardo's estate, to fit him out as a gallant, can bring a valuable piece later. But this is hardly material for romantic comedy, and because of the indulgent treatment of unfaithful wives, unchaste girls, thieves, libertines and fools, the force of its presentation is lost. In fact the source material is nearly all satiric in origin : Boccaccio is satirising the stupidity of the men who run the Church, Marston sententious parents, Simson usurers, and if this satiric element is left out the result is witty intrigue without a deeper stratum. In the end the play is found not to have progressed very far with its investigation of women's status in relation to marriage and sex, except perhaps in the action concerning Francisco. It is undoubtedly less satisfactory than the tragicomedies which

follow.

SOURCES

Main plot : Giovanni Boccaccio, Decamerone, II.2 and III.3, in William Painter, The Pallace of Pleasure (1566), or John Marston, The Fawn (1606), or R.C., A World of Wonders (1607) ; ? details from Ben Jonson, Bartholomew Fair (1614) and S.S[imson], The Honest Lawyer (1616).
Subplot : Unknown.

Middleton's next play, A Fair Quarrel, is once again a collaboration. The collaborator was, in this case, most important for Middleton's later development, for the man who wrote part of A Fair Quarrel, William Rowley, was not primarily a dramatist, but an actor. Whatever his defects, he and Middleton never turned out a play which failed. The World Tost at Tennis (1620) encountered some criticism, as we shall see in chapter eight. On the whole, however, the partnership between the ironic dramatist and the humorous fat actor on A Fair Quarrel (published in quarto, twice, in 1617) marked the beginning of a collaboration second only in distinction to that of Beaumont and Fletcher.

There are other surprising things about A Fair Quarrel. A more marked Christian element appears in the play, at least in Middleton's part, with the effect of adding depth to the characters of the main plot, Lady Ager and her son. Charles Lamb and T.S. Eliot bestowed high praise on the play, because of the convincing portrayal of Lady Ager's dilemma. Another critic[13] has gone so far as to suggest that Rowley's collaboration must be taken seriously :

> in collaborated plays[i.e. in which Rowley

13. Dewar M. Robb, "The Canon of William Rowley's Plays," MLR, XLV (1950), 130-131.

> was involved] there is usually a good deal of composite work, scenes by one author showing also traces of another author's hand. Often, for instance, Rowley's writing appears to have been revised by the more fastidious Middleton.... In the case of A Fair Quarrel I fancy the process was something like this : the theme (it is quite unlike Middleton's plots to date, and just such a story as a disciple of Heywood would devise) was Rowley's, as was also most of the original writing. But Middleton came in on it from the start, assisted in the planning, talked it over till it captured his imagination, wrote the chief scenes (in the process revealing potentialities of his own genius which had had no scope in the satirical comedies which had been his line so far), and finally ... revised, sometimes superficially, sometimes in detail, many of Rowley's scenes, yet not so thoroughly but that Rowley's hand is still clearly distinguishable in two-thirds of the play reckoned in pages ; and it was Rowley who wrote and signed the dedicatory epistle as to a work of his own.

Obviously, this confident analysis of the collaboration is deeply tinged with impressionism ; and Robb is in error when he says that the theme seems to be Rowley's. Karl Christ[14] reminds us that Middleton knew Heywood's A Woman Killed with Kindness (1607) before it was printed, for he mentions it in The Black Book (1604) ; we shall see that Heywood's play is probably the source for the main plot of A Fair Quarrel. There will be further occasion to modify Robb's statement as we proceed.

Other critics are convinced that the play can be divided up scene by scene, and on the whole there is no great variance. An early but perceptive contribution to the subject was made by Pauline G. Wiggin,[15] whose critical remarks on

14. Quellenstudien, p.41.
15. An Inquiry into the Authorship of the Middleton-Rowley Plays (Boston, 1897).

Rowley are still very valuable : "Rowley makes no attempt to analyze conflicting emotions, or to exhibit both the strength and the weakness of his characters ; ... life is more complicated than Rowley shows it to be" (p.16). She characterises Rowley as an exaggerator, a touchstone phrase which is always useful in approaching the Middleton-Rowley collaborations. Using the critical tests of tone and dramatic intention, and linking them with mechanical verse-tests, Miss Wiggin gave to Middleton the main plot concerning Lady Ager and her son (II.i., III.i., III.iii., IV.iii. and V. [last part]). Act I is problematic, for it launches both plots, and up to line 134 there are signs of Middleton's style. R.H. Barker[16] would cut this stretch of Middleton down to the first thirty lines. Middleton, it seems from all the evidence, asked Rowley to create the quarrel between the Captain and the Colonel, but did not pass over the source tale to Rowley. In fact Middleton himself did not follow it very closely ; in centralizing the duel, he reduced his source, "Salimbene and Angelica," the XXX. novel of The second Tome of the Palace of Pleasure (1567), by William Painter, to occupying only the main plot scenes after IV.ii., and suggesting the broad outlines of the quarrel between two close friends. The tale exists in many versions, and came to Painter from Illicini by way of Bandello and Belleforest.[17] Heywood seems to have used Painter as the source for the subplot of his A Woman Killed with Kindness (1607), thus producing a second English version. A third is that of Geffraie Fenton, who translated the story for his Certaine Tragicall Discourses (1567), Discourse I, "A wounderful vertue in a gentleman of Sienna on the behalfe of his enemie, whome he delivered from death : and the other, to retorne his courtesye with equall frendshipp, presented hym wyth his syster, whom he knewe he loved entierelie." This version likewise derives from Belleforest, but is even more prolix than

16. Thomas Middleton, p.184.
17. A Woman Killed with Kindness, ed. R.W. Van Fossen (London, 1961), pp.xvii-xviii.

Painter's long-winded narrative.

Painter tells the story of two Sienese houses, Salimbene and Montanine, which were on very friendly terms. After a boar-hunting expedition, a quarrel arose over the question of which party had acquitted itself best, and blows followed. The Salimbenes had the worst of this brawl ; however, they revenged themselves quickly, almost wiping out the Montanines, except for Charles Montanine and his sister Angelica. Quietness and peace followed this outbreak, and Anselmo Salimbene now first began to notice and then fall in love with Angelica. Meanwhile a covetous citizen sought to buy up Charles' one remaining farm, and when Charles refused to sell, a lying accusation was framed against him so that his property became forfeit and himself thrown into prison. Angelica was deeply distressed both for her brother and their fortunes. Charles sought the citizen so that he could pay off the forfeiture and free himself, but the citizen's aims had now changed to the total ruin of the Montanine family. Charles determined to dispose himself to repentance and the salvation of his soul, and leave his sister provided for. But Anselmo Salimbene heard of the impending execution, and for love of Angelica decided to help Montanine and form a lasting friendship with him. Charles, released from prison, felt that the offer of his sister was the only way to recompense Salimbene, whom he judged to be in love with her. Angelica objected strongly to this plan ; but Montanine insisted it was his duty and that Salimbene, knowing his, would not abuse the maiden. When Angelica was offered to him, at his house, Salimbene called his relatives to witness that he would take Angelica in marriage, who, although she had only a small dowry, more than made up for it in "modestie and integritie." Montanine was made heir of all his goods if he died childless.

Painter makes it clear that he regarded this as a tale demonstrating gratitude, full of tragicomical matter. Fenton adds more material, by way of amplification, but nothing which affects Middleton. It is thus an open question as to

which English version he used, Painter, Fenton or Heywood. One slight clue might perhaps just favour Heywood : after Scene iii of A Woman Killed with Kindness, in which the quarrel takes place over the relative merits of the hawks of Sir Charles Mountford and Sir Francis Acton, and in which Sir Charles kills two of Acton's men, Susan, Charles' sister, meets her victorious brother coming from the fight and assumes that he is in need of a surgeon. She begins calling for one until her brother points out he is not really wounded. Just so Lady Ager calls for a surgeon when her son returns victorious from the field (IV.iii.17), and with equal pointlessness. Heywood has cut the Montanine-Salimbene encounters down to one, as Sir Charles (Mountford, derived from Montanine) is then arrested. Sir Charles, the victor on the field, has the rightful cause on his side, and we naturally sympathise with him. His victory on the field is turned into a defeat by the resulting effect of the law against murder, and so, like the Colonel in A Fair Quarrel, he is the one likely to die as a result of the original quarrel. The whole idea of the gradual revenge by the defeated side found in the Italian is, for reasons of economy, cut by Heywood, and Mountford finds himself in gaol, and the loser, by a single stroke. The covetous citizen Shafton is introduced to ruin the impoverished Sir Charles after his first acquittal from murder, in accord with the source-tale ; and Sir Francis finds the means at hand for Sir Charles' final destruction because

> The appeal is su'd still for my huntsmen's death,
> Which only I have power to reverse.
> (sc.VIII, 70-71)

But it is Sir Francis' generosity when Mountford is ruined and close to death that causes Mountford to be indebted to him, and to realize that his sister is the one thing he can offer the man he deems noble. In scene XIV he springs upon her what he has in mind, and she, very reluctantly, after threatening suicide, agrees to marry Sir Francis.

The Colonel's defeated position and proximity to death is a direct result of the duel in A Fair Quarrel. In III.i. he finds himself, after taunting Captain Ager, seriously wounded and close to death ; and in IV.ii. he informs his sister, by means of having his will read, that she has inherited his total worldly wealth, provided that she offer herself to Ager. She is very reluctant, and believes it must mean misery, but she agrees because her brother feels a great sense of obligation. As in Heywood's play, the transformation of the girl's feeling of revulsion to relative enthusiasm is remarkably swift. Both Sir Francis and Captain Ager feel overcome at the gift of the enemy's sister for wife ; in A Fair Quarrel this is very strange, since Captain Ager had never, at any time, expressed any interest in the Colonel's sister—in fact, the first we hear of her is after the duel. Undoubtedly this incident is an afterthought, and may represent a decision to use more of the tale of Angelo and Salimbene than was first intended. A Fair Quarrel presents us with a story of a quarrel between close friends which, after bringing one of them near to death—the loser of the duel—ends by restoring them to friendship through the gift of the loser's sister to his enemy after the enemy has first demonstrated his generosity by charitableness.

The outline of indebtedness to some form of the Italian tale is fairly clear, although there is little justification for thinking in terms of anything other than a general inspiration. The quarrel over the relative merits of the hunting parties is easily transformed into a quarrel over the valour of the two soldiers, but the great change comes when the duel takes place. The hero wins in both plays, yet Middleton had no use for the turn of events whereby the winner becomes indebted to the opponent. Much better to leave out such a twist, give the reconciling sister to the defeated man, and make room for something more important—the anxiety of the Captain's mother over the whole quarrel and duel. Hugo Jung[18] thought that Hamlet's relation with

18. Das Verhältnis Thomas Middleton's zu Shakespere, p.60.

his mother was somewhere involved in Middleton's conception, and indeed Captain Ager's sexual curiosity is very strange and not entirely to be accounted for by the fact that he wishes to be completely certain of the ground of his quarrel. Anyway, since that is not very firm ground, Middleton must take the credit for what is, in truth, the finest part of the play, as R.H. Barker[19] indicates. Lady Ager is the worthy object of her son's love and admiration :

> this seven year hast thou known me
> A widow, only married to my vow ;
> That's no small witness of my faith and love
> To him that in life was thy honour'd father.
> (II.i.110-113)

It is as if at last Middleton had idealised the situation of his early years as he wanted it to be. Lady Ager is noble, and something more : devoted passionately to her son, for whom she will even tell a lie.

Other critics have different interpretations of this central portion devoted to the concept of honour in the quarrel, and have not stressed the mother at all—chiefly Fredson Bowers in two places, a full-length article on A Fair Quarrel and part of a book tracing the history of the revenge code.[20] Doubtless James I himself was interested in this examination of the grounds for duelling, as he was trying to discourage the whole idea of private revenge. Bowers' article shows that there is a definite decorum observed in the insult, the giving of the lie, the challenge and the final ground of combat, and it also proves that Middleton expanded this part of the play in the light of up-tp-date thinking. Middleton had also another point to make in examining Captain Ager's refusal to fight in an unjust cause, and so he

19. Thomas Middleton, pp.105-108.
20. F.T. Bowers, "Middleton's Fair Quarrel and the Duelling Code," JEGP, XXVI (1937), 40-65 ; Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587-1642 (Princeton, 1940), pp.187-188.

arranged the victory of Ager as if it were inevitable. For Ager is committed to more than honour ; he is committed to truth, and the spirit of truth, with a religious passion : "Truth never fails her servant, sir" (III.i.167), he says after his victory. The duel represents a conflict between pride and honour, between self-glorification and glorification of an ideal. Clearly enough, the Colonel undergoes a religious conversion during his illness from the wound (cf. IV.ii.43-56), where he speaks of "invisible enemies", "repentance", and significantly, the "power of ghostly valour". Captain Ager is the Christian protagonist who fights with truth on his side ; his mother is a weak creature who attempts to remove the truths on his side because she fears the outcome. And truth in the end overcomes the Colonel, who is thus forced to acknowledge its superior power in his hour of defeat. In a speech just before the duel, Ager appeals to the Colonel to repent, after preaching a kind of sermon (III.i.75-90). The absence of references to God or Christ is admittedly odd if this is a Christian appeal, but I think this objection can be met by saying that Middleton probably felt his message could not be made too obtrusive.

Before coming to consider the subplot and its excrescence, the Roaring School, mention must be made of the source of the medical satire in the main plot. There is a surgeon who attends to the wounded Colonel, and he is allotted the rôle of a humourous character who repeats strings of pretentious but irrelevant technical terms. In reading the play, this man seems particularly incongruous at the time when the Colonel is undergoing his change of heart, but perhaps on the stage he is effective. He is restricted to the opening part of IV.ii. and three speeches in V.i., but manages in that space to mention such terms as chilis, cava vena, oesophag, diaphragma, spinal medul, emunctories, syncope, tumefaction, and a host of other preposterous scraps of learning. A good number of these—especially the various preparations and remedies mentioned—can be found in Bartholomew Traheron's The most excellent workes

of chirurgerye of Vigon (1586) in two volumes, with part of volume two devoted to wounds and their cure. Out of thirty-three of these grandiloquent words and phrases, about twenty can be traced to Traheron. However, the outstanding ones, plus a few terms found in The Widow, spouted by the medical quacks of that play, suggest another medical treatise not yet tracked down. George R. Price[21] agrees that no one source can be singled out, and quotes from Thomas Vicary, W. Clowes and J. Woodall. Where he seems to me to go wrong is in imagining that the corruption of the terms is due to Middleton, for the terms are sadly mangled. "The errors are so numerous and glaring," says Price, "that the dramatist's intention is clear—to show a vain man, ignorant of Latin and Greek, mispronouncing the polysyllables he has heard at Surgeons' Hall or wrestled with in a surgical manual." My experience of compositors and their ways, together with the worthlessness of such subtlety on the stage, induces me to claim that Middleton copied his surgeon's terms accurately enough from whatever manual or manuals he used. Dover Wilson had a similar experience in connection with Love's Labours Lost which strengthens my view of the matter : "I have now reached the conclusion that the quarto's distortion of familiar tags from Lyly's grammar, the colloquies of Erasmus, etc. with which Shakespeare interlards their talk is far more likely to have originated in the printing office than to have been deliberately intended by the dramatist as a rather clumsy and often obscure device of heaping additional ridicule upon pedants already exceedingly funny without it."[22]

The subplot forms the second line of action and can be seen as organically linked to the quarrel and duelling story. Jane, its heroine, is a spirited young woman who forms a contrast to Lady Ager, and in the face of temptation to commit adultery maintains a sturdy independence.

21. "Medical Men In A Faire Quarrell," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXIV (Jan.-Feb. 1950), 38-42.
22. New Cambridge Edition (1962), p.viii.

She has truth on her side—she is secretly married to the man by whom she is with child—and is not afraid of the consequences if the birth of her child must be revealed. Lady Ager actually seeks to save her son by pretending she has been an adulteress, and is greatly afraid of the truth coming out.

From the time of Pauline Wiggin's monograph onwards, it has been assumed that Rowley wrote this part of the play together with the irritating and tedious comedy of the Roaring School. D.M. Robb, in 1950, made a very large claim indeed for Rowley in A Fair Quarrel, but there is some evidence that nothing beyond the rough slapstick was Rowley's. The reaction set in with W.D. Dunkel[23] in 1933, and this lead was followed by E. Engelberg[24] in 1953, who attacked the logic of Miss Wiggin's arguments. Dunkel claimed, by comparing the subplot of A Fair Quarrel to The Family of Love, it was apparent that the subplot of the later play was Middletonian in subject-matter and treatment. He sought to reconcile his own findings with those of Miss Wiggin by suggesting that Rowley revised the scenes in question. His argument about the idea of introducing a foolish suitor for an intelligent girl being typical of Middleton is especially convincing, I think—witness Women Beware Women, and also No Wit No Help Like a Woman's for the incident of having a secretly-married girl, pregnant already, put forward by her unwitting father as a bride for another man. Engelberg thought the Jane-Physician scene in A Fair Quarrel (III.ii.), where Jane is tempted to fornication, quite obviously a kind of early draft for the greater one in The Changeling (III.iv.), and he cited good parallels. "Middleton," he concludes, "wrote both scenes," and he does not bring in the need for Rowley's revision. On different grounds from Engelberg, I join the dissenters against those who claim

23. "Did Not Rowley Merely Revise Middleton ?" PMLA, XLVIII (1933), 799-805.
24. "A Middleton-Rowley Dispute," NQ, CXCVIII (August, 1953), 330-332.

that the Jane-Fitzallen-Russell plot was all Rowley's work. Gerard Langbaine observed in An Account of the English Dramatick Poets (1691), that "the plot of Fitz-allen, Russel and Jane, is founded, as I suppose, on some Italian Novel and may be read in English in the Complaisant Companion, octavo p.280. That part of the Physician tempting Jane, and then accusing her, is founded on a Novel of Cynthio Giraldi : see Dec. 4. Nov. 5" (p.372). If for the moment the question of The Complaisant Companion is set aside, because of some difficulty in Langbaine's reference, an examination of the other source mentioned quickly brings one to the point of considering the subplot Middleton's as a serious possibility. Middleton had used the immediately preceding story, Dec. IV, Nov. IV, in The Witch ; he had taken an Italian story, La Sorella, of a girl pregnant secretly by a young man no-one knew she had married, for the subplot of No Wit, which has the incident of the father mistakenly attempting to marry his already spoken-for daughter ; and in cutting down La Sorella to fit the subplot of No Wit, he worked in exactly the same way in which he now cut down G.B. Giraldi Cinthio's fifth novel of the fourth day to fit A Fair Quarrel's subplot.

The fifth novel of the fourth day of Cinthio's Hecatommithi (1574) is headed "Nepa, made pregnant by a lover of hers, secretly gives birth to her child with the help of a Doctor ; the Doctor becomes enamoured of her, but she does not consent to his lustful desires ; the Doctor reveals the hidden deed, she defends herself, and is believed a chaste girl, and the Doctor suffers the penalty of his folly" (f. 187). The story which follows is very long, and the redactor, whom I assume is Middleton from now on, read a page or two before starting to use the story. Nepa, the heroine, lived in the Danish court ; she was of high birth, besides being very beautiful. A handsome knight at court called Liscone fell in love with her, and she returned the love. However, marriage was out of the question on account of the attitude of Nepa's father and brothers to the disparity in rank

and wealth between Liscone and Nepa. If the couple were to disobey the commands of the King and Queen regarding chastity, death would undoubtedly follow for them ; secret marriage, once discovered, would bring death at the hands of Nepa's father and brothers. Liscone suggested that intimacy could take place between them if a safeguard was first adopted. Nepa was quite willing, but for the fear of pregnancy, to consent ; and Liscone overcame her reluctance by pointing out that he knew of a safe means of contraception which he had proved a thousand times over. Intimacy proceeded for a while between the two, until Nepa one day found her breasts full of milk, whereupon Liscone was, like countless other young men throughout the ages, thunderstruck. Nepa suggested that Liscone flee, and let her bear the punishment, for her rank might help her to escape death ; Liscone, however, at once rejected the idea. Nepa next suggested it would be better for Liscone if she committed suicide, but Liscone insisted that in such a case he would have to die too. He himself preferred some resourceful escape—not abortion, since Nepa might die in the process, but concealment of the pregnancy followed by a secret delivery of the child.

It is at this point that Middleton began to use the story, and in I.i. we find Russell, Jane's father, planning to marry his daughter off to a rich suitor instead of the needy young man at present paying court to her. Since no brothers appear, Russell obviously stands for Nepa's father and brothers, and in Jacobean society the only grudge he can have against a suitor is lack of riches. Fitzallen, the equivalent of Liscone, is made the cousin of the Colonel, and thus the treatment Russell metes out to Fitzallen over the marriage becomes a further ground for friction. between the Colonel and Captain Ager, who is Russell's nephew. Fitzallen and Jane appear together in I.i., whereupon Russell springs a trap to arrest Fitzallen. Russell arranges for two men who are really sergeants to enter the house on the pretext of

being "salt-petre" men—that is, government inspectors empowered to search for "earth impregnated with animal matter."[25] The swords of Ager and the Colonel have been removed, ostensibly to prevent a duel breaking out, and thus Fitzallen is hauled off without redress, charged fictiously with being £1000 in debt. Before he goes he has a conversation with Jane rather like the one the couple in Cinthio have when they know Nepa is pregnant ; Fitzallen swears fidelity to Jane (I.i.379-380). Jane, like Nepa, is pregnant and not far off her time. As mentioned, this couple are secretly married (II.ii.86)[26] ; Middleton, as usual in dealing with Italian material, feels he must render details like this more palatable if he is to win sympathy for his heroine from an English audience. Nor is there any mention of Fitzallen having had experience with other women ; the long Italian tale is cut down so thoroughly to get it into the compass of a subplot that such detail would be mere luxury. Jane is thrown back on her own resources.

Nepa was about to be helped out of her dilemma by Liscone when Middleton took up the story. Liscone, having gone out of the city in attendance on the King, suddenly finds himself nominated by the King to go on an embassage to Poland. This, it is implied, would be a lengthy affair, and thus Liscone remains effectively out of the story and unable to help Nepa until alll the trouble is over. Now chance takes a hand. The Queen's doctor has been attending Nepa for a headache, and when he asks her about her trouble—she has been in deep distress since Liscone went away—the story of the pregnancy comes out. Nepa falls to her knees in asking for understanding and help, with typical Italian emotionalism, and the Doctor raises her

25. Note in Bullen's edition, IV, 173.
26. Richard Levin, in "The Three Quarrels of A Fair Quarrel," SP, LXI (1964), 219-231, claims that Jane is not married. I shall have occasion to return to this article.

up, and promises his discreet co-operation. When the ninth month arrives, Nepa is put to bed with the story that she is ill with a serious pain in her side. The Doctor puts his sister Simmacha, "very shrewd and of a sympathetic spirit", in charge of Nepa, and her first promise is to keep everything perfectly quiet and a secret to herself.

All this part of the story Middleton crowds into II.ii., with a few changes, because he wants to hurry on to the business of letting Rowley introduce Chough, the clownish Cornishman, as the foolish but wealthy suitor in Fitzallen's place. Jane meets the Physician at the beginning of the scene, having previously said that she did not feel well at the end of I.i.—perhaps because of the baby, perhaps because Russell had been expounding cynically to the nauseation of his daughter on the theme of marrying a fool if he had wealth. Jane is much more spirited than Nepa, and twits the Physician for not recognising what is wrong with her. She suggests that a feminine confidante is really better for what she has to tell than the Physician, and so he fetches his sister Anne. Anne promises to say nothing at all about the pregnancy when she learns of it, except to her brother. Then, after a mere hundred lines of the scene, Russell brings in Chough with Trimtram, his man. Rowley introduces some harrowing horseplay which involves an attempt by Chough to wrestle with Jane. Chough is just the sort of fool, living in a world of his own, which we encounter in the subplot of The Changeling.

The next event in Cinthio's tale is of course the delivery of the baby ; it is a boy, and Simmacha takes it and presents it to the Doctor ; he gives it to a woman living out in the country, claiming that it is the child of himself and a German mistress. Nepa is extremely grateful both to the Doctor and Simmacha for all the help she has had. The Doctor says that his reward must be to enjoy her, so enamoured of her has he become. He would be most careful not to make Nepa pregnant if she were to consent. Nepa replies in the angriest terms ; the

Doctor then thinks of sending Simmacha to Nepa, in the hope of bending her to his will in that way, but Simmacha replies she is not only unwilling to be an instrument in such an affair, but will encourage Nepa to preserve her honour if Nepa mentions the offer. The Doctor resolves on other means to satisfy his desires.

Middleton packs this part of the story into III.ii. ; immediately at the beginning of this scene we meet the Physician passing over the baby to a Dutch nurse to care for it. He speaks of it as his "heart's joy". As Price notes in his article, "Even the 'Dutch nurse' of A Faire Quarrell may have been suggested to the playwrights by the 'German paramour' whom the Italian Physician gives out to be the mother of the baby" (p.41). Jane thanks the Physician profusely for his service, and offers to pay him. From this point on, the scene reads like a first draft of the scene in which Beatrice-Joanna attempts to pay off De Flores for his services in ridding her of the impediment to her happiness. The Doctor will not accept money ; Jane fails to understand the significance of this refusal. Then the Physician, after the offer of recompense has been pressed, reveals his real desire, and coyly suggests that "our meanings are better understood / Than shifted to the tongue" (III.ii.81-82). Like Nepa, Jane cannot grasp his drift immediately ; when she does, she repudiates him with such vehemence that she spits at him. Instead of showing us the interview between the Doctor and Anne, Middleton sends her directly onstage to try to persuade Jane. Like Simmacha, Anne warns Jane not to yield to her brother. This device is perhaps used for brevity, but probably because we see Jane confirmed by Anne in her course of risking everything. Jane is not friendless ; thus the dramatic hint has been given of the way out of the labyrinth.

After a second unsuccessful attempt by the Doctor to persuade Nepa to commit fornication with him, he was obliged to wait on circumstances. The King's widowed sister, called Catigora, had a quarrel of some duration with the

Queen. Both ladies had a surrounding court of ladies-in-waiting who were unmarried virgins. The Queen's son had fallen in love with one of Catigora's young women, and the fear that he might want to marry her had sharpened the Queen's dislike of Catigora and the license of her young ladies. Catigora one day had given the first offence, in an allusion to the Queen's young ladies, and the Queen, stung, accused Catigora of having harlots amongst her girls. Now Nepa was of the Queen's entourage, and the Doctor, overhearing the exchange of insults, decided to avenge himself by putting a weapon of retaliation into Catigora's hands. Accordingly he related Nepa's misadventure to Catigora, promising to back up, as a witness, his accusation. Catigora lost no time in uttering the charge, but the Queen scorned it as malicious ; however, she requested Nepa to clear herself. Nepa was forced to lie to repudiate the charge ; the Doctor was called, and he revealed details of the pregnancy, the child's provenance, and its present guardian. Nepa replied by claiming that the Doctor tried to seduce her, but after she had refused he was moved to deprive her of her honour through malice. The Doctor counteracted by claiming that his sister would clear the whole business up as a second witness, if called ; but the Queen stipulated that the Doctor must depart so that his presence would not give any indication to Simmacha as to what to say. Simmacha, as we know, was a woman of integrity and truthfulness, but she had also promised to protect Nepa. Since she did not know her brother's reputation was at stake, she was prepared this once to lie. Cinthio has here prepared a great dramatic moment, akin to the moment in <u>The Crucible</u> when John Proctor is depending on his wife to discredit the witch-hunting girl Abigail as a lecheress before the informal hearing ;but since he is forced to turn away from his wife Elizabeth, she believes she is doing right in telling a lie for the first time in her life. Thus she ruins her husband and brings him to his death ; so Simmacha brings her brother to his. Simmacha lies, and says Nepa is honest, sexually innocent ; Cat-

igora repeats the charge that Simmacha actually helped at the delivery, and Simmacha is forced to vindicate the truthfulness of her brother. She chooses an unfortunate way : she claims that her brother has recently been attacked and beaten over the head, with the result that he is given to wandering in his mind. This lie quite invalidates anything the Doctor can say later. Nepa, somewhat disconcertingly, is made to attribute this quick-witted lie as an example of special grace from God. Catigora plays her last card : she calls for someone to bring the independent testimony of the woman taking care of the child. Of course, the woman repeats the story she was told, that the child is the fruit of a union between the Doctor and a German mistress. The Doctor is discredited as mad, and Catigora shamed ; Nepa is prepared to deny her child for the sake of her pretence of innocence. It is with an effort that we remember that Nepa's life is at stake, but the whole framing of the Doctor becomes totally repellent when Nepa lets him take the full punishment of death for her immorality.

For Nepa's father and brothers do not believe the Doctor is mad at all, but simply malicious, and they believe that the scandalous charge is bound to leave a stain on Nepa's reputation. Accordingly the Doctor is punished by them, and we gather that it was brutal enough to cause his death. Liscone returns, and he may marry the girl because the father and brothers believe she is marked for life by the accusation made by Catigora. Liscone is upgraded by the grateful King to be a count, and given a castle in fief ; he has the baby brought up in the Doctor's name, and at fifteen the boy is married in an advantageous match. He eventually becomes a marshal of the King's, although his parents never dare to declare his real parenthood. So the somewhat equivocal tale of illegitimacy and connivance at lying comes to an end, Cinthio seemingly in entire approval of Nepa's escape and course of action.

Middleton winds up the story of Jane and the Physician in V.i., which constitutes the whole

of act five. Jane is dressed as Chough's bride, so far have the marriage negotiations progressed, though we may guess that this is merely a device to have Jane ready to be married to the right man the moment he appears. Yet the Physician is still trying to persuade Jane to submit to him, especially now that she can do it under cover of this marriage to a fool. Upon her refusal, he begins to threaten her with exposure. Since Middleton cannot afford space to introduce the business of a quarrel such as that between Catigora and the Queen, he has to find someone among his characters with an interest in Jane's sexual innocence. Chough is, like the Queen, anxious to know whether Jane's virginity is lost or not when the Physician claims her honour is "naught" (1.94). The Physician says he will prove she has borne a bastard. Chough therefore brings the charge before Russell, Jane's father, who repudiates it. It is Russell, however, rather than Chough, who conducts the enquiry. Jane denies that the charge of whoredom is true, and attributes the malice of disappointed lust to the Physician for motive, and Anne, who is present, says that her brother speaks "wild words ; he's oftentimes mad, sir!" (1.231). The Physician, driven to irritated retaliation by this fabrication, goes without prompting to fetch both nurse and child. Thus a great deal of Cinthio's narrative dealing with the trial of Nepa is rapidly covered ; though only now the real changes come. Middleton's English morality asserts itself, and he is not content to let Jane be the lying pretender that the Italian girl is. Before the Physician gets back with the baby, Jane admits she has a child (it is worth remembering, however, that the penalty for such an admission is not death). Russell accepts the inevitable and has Fitzallen sent for to the wedding, and the tragic ending whereby the child remains illegitimate and the Doctor is murdered is rejected in favour of comedy. Yet Middleton is not quite done with the source ; the Dutch nurse appears and points to the Physician as the father of the child. Russell threatens the Physician with punishment for defamation, and thus

both Jane and he are chastened for their faults. He also seeks to entrap Fitzallen into a marriage of convenience, because he believes that Jane will be difficult to marry off now she has borne a child. Liscone, was, we remember, treated likewise as a useful cover for defamed honour in Cinthio's tale, but as W.D. Dunkel[27] suggests, The Family of Love is the real source for this device :

> In both plays the lover stipulates the addition of "one thousand pounds" to the dowry, if he marries the girl.... In both plays the father, or the guardian, upon payment of "one thousand pounds" discovers that the lover is father of the child.[28]

Chough and Trimtram sing a song revealing Jane's motherhood—they are under the impression the Physician is the father—and Russell increases his inducement to Fitzallen by a thousand pieces. Only then does Fitzallen reveal it is his own child and that he married Jane first. The Physician ends his part in the play with the simple words "I am asham'd" (1.381). No-one is to suffer, no-one has told any lies ; Russell is cured of his status-seeking, Jane has suffered for deceiving the world, Fitzallen has likewise been imprisoned, and the Physician is ashamed of

27. "Did Not Rowley Merely Revise Middleton ?" p.799.
28. Cf. A.T. Brissenden, Sexual Themes in Jacobean Drama With Special Reference to Tourneur, Webster, Middleton and Ford, unpublished University of London dissertation (1962) : "Middleton's characters are not corrupted when sexual relationship is initially an expression of love, but when it is misused and takes the form of adultery, fornication or incest. Gerardine and Maria in The Family of Love and Fitzallen and Jane in A Fair Quarrel consummate their love before marriage and in each case the girl becomes pregnant ... These couples are not corrupted by sexual experience, nor are they punished for their indulgence" (p.146).

his lust. At V.i.395 the stage is given over to the reconciliation of Captain Ager and the Colonel, and we can be quite certain that Middleton's hand finishes off the happy ending.

Rowley, I believe, was responsible for the parts of the scenes in the subplot involving Chough and Trimtram, although Middleton wrote the temptation-scene and adapted the source-story for the subplot. A Fair Quarrel is essentially Middleton's creation ; II.i.104-end is Rowley's work ; IV.i., a Roaring School scene, his ; the absurd, pointless addition of IV.iv. Rowley's (the scene was not even in the first impression of the play) ; and V.i.36-395 largely Rowley working over Middleton's outline of the plot. Trimtram, Chough and the Roarers are so out of key with the serious treatment of Jane and the Physician that I believe Dunkel's explanation is right : "Rowley's verse style in these comic scenes indicates merely the work of a reviser." Yet Rowley's work was obviously the more popular, for the second impression adds to the Roaring material rather than to the duelling theme. Three new characters appear just for this scene, Captain Albo, a braggart pimp, Meg and Priss, bawd and harlot, on whom Chough and Trimtram exercise their expensively-acquired "roaring" techniques. "Roaring" is an eccentric way of insulting people, full of preposterous terms. Miss Margery Fisher[29] analyses one such term, and finds that there is a kind of mad rhyme and reason in Rowley's mental associations.

Something which Gerard Langbaine said has puzzled scholars ever since ; Karl Christ,[30] for instance, speaks thus of Langbaine's remark :

> Langbaine believed part of the subplot to be reacknowledged in a short story in The Complaisant Companion which first appeared in 1674, and which, as he conjectured, again goes back to an Italian source. I have come across further references to this English

29. "!Bronstrops'. A Note on 'A Faire Quarrell'," MLR, XXXV (1940), 59-62.
30. Quellenstudien, pp.43-44.

collection ... in Arber, Hazlitt, a copy of which I found in the Huth Library (London), and in the Catalogue of the last mentioned.

It was unfortunately impossible for me to look at this copy, as during my stay in London the Huth Library was packed ready for shipping to a location of the present owner. Nevertheless, the tale mentioned by Langbaine hardly need be of greater importance in the question of the play's sources, when the chief feature of the subplot is already given in Giraldi Cinthio's short story, and the trimmings and garnishing referring to English affairs are so obviously the work of a London playwright that they are hardly conceivable in an Italian Novella. Possibly the much later story of the Complaisant Companion is also only a working-up of the drama.

Langbaine in 1691 had casually made the remark quoted before the discussion of Cinthio's influence on Middleton, but Karl Christ never saw the work ; in fact Langbaine's reference is entirely wrong. Pages 1-96 of the Complaisant Companion contain a section called "Domestick Jests", and pages 1-136 a section called "Forreign Jests". On p.117 of this latter section begins the third of a series of "Choice Novels", which run from p.115 to p. 123, simply titled "Another". It may well derive from Middleton's play (although the compiler thought it was foreign), for it has the motif of the secret marriage in it which Cinthio's tale does not. Yet the father, Russell's equivalent, has a wife, and he does not practise any trick on the young man as Russell does. Moreover, the pregnancy in this tale is a deliberate strategem, to force the father's hand, and hence there is no mention of a physician assisting the girl. The father pays two thousand pounds for the marriage, and agrees to a further five hundred upon the birth of a child. On learning from the parson that his daughter is no whore, the old man is pleased enough to make the five hundred into a thousand. Two thousand is the price Russell pays in the end to Fitzallen, so

that kinship between A Fair Quarrel and the Complaisant Companion tale cannot be ruled out. It is just conceivable that the business of Russell "tricking" Fitzallen into marriage by bribing him to father his own child, since it is not found in Cinthio, may be from a jest tradition going back before Middleton's play.

Although R.H. Barker was enthusiastic about the main action, Samuel Schoenbaum[31] found "little originality in Middleton's main design, which illustrates the trite sentiment implied by the title ...," but he did find the study of the relation between Lady Ager and her son excellent, inspired, writing. "It is in keeping with the underlying morality of Middleton's universe that the irony which defeats Lady Ager preserves the integrity of her son" (p.16). I would go on to say that the irony which bemuses Lady Ager, of being forced into a position in which action in either direction, truth or untruth, results in loss of happiness, dictated the choice of subplot, for Jane must choose between the relative amount of joy to be had out of concealing her pregnancy or revealing it. But Jane's concealment of truth is effective because people are ready to believe her fiction, whereas Captain Ager wishes only to follow the highest dictates of his conscience ; his mother's version of the facts is a mere hindrance to him. Middleton, then, almost certainly chose and translated Cinthio's tale, and left the rest of the comedy to Rowley. Rowley may have known what he was doing, for we who have never seen the play on the stage cannot know why the Jacobean audience wanted more of "Mr. Chaughs and Trimtrams Roaring, and the Bauds Song."

Richard Levin[32] in a recent article claimed a total unity for the play, down to the added scene at the end of act four, which is patently an absurd idea. He is in error in my opinion when he claims Rowley wrote the subplot (p.219), that Jane is not married prior to the fifth act (p.220), and that Heywood and Middleton

31. "Middleton's Tragicomedies," p.16.
32. "The Three Quarrels of A Fair Quarrel," pp. 219-231.

were not using the same source (p.230). But the chief defect of this kind of approach is that it fails constantly to see that the quality of the writing gives no warrant for minute verbal analyses, since the general workmanship is unconcentrated into line and phrase. I do not think Mr. Levin has superimposed a pattern on the play which remotely fits it, ingenious as his article is.

William Rowley was a Duke of York's-Prince Charles' actor, and he no doubt had the play put on, probably sometime in 1617. L.W. Hanson[33] says that "eight papers of payments made by Sir Robert Cary as Chamberlain to Prince Charles throw some light on the obscure history of the Princes' company. They would seem to suggest that Middleton and Rowley's A Fair Quarrel was acted in November 1617 and that the company was occupying the Curtain in 1620." Since the first quarto was published in 1617, the assumption follows that the play was an immediate success and the second 1617 quarto's additional scene the result of popular demand. In that case the most likely place for the performance was the Red Bull.[34] The association and friendship with William Rowley may have given Middleton a second string to his bow besides the King's men, and indeed by this date he was probably becoming a recognised and even prosperous dramatist. Some critics, like Martin Sampson, have put A Fair Quarrel beside The Changeling, ahead of all the rest of Middleton's work. With this play Middleton moves into the period of writing drama which would last well beyond its own day.

Sources

Main Plot : William Painter, The XXX. novel of The second Tome of the Palace of Pleasure (1567) ; also possibly, Bartholomew Traheron, The most

33. "The Shakespeare Collection in the Bodleian Library," Shakespeare Survey, 4 (1951), 91.
34. G.E. Bentley, The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, I, 202.

		excellent workes of chirurgerye of Vigon (1586).
Subplot	:	G.B. Giraldi Cinthio, Hecatommithi (1574), IV.4.

William Rowley's presence has not been suspected in More Dissemblers Besides Women (printed 1657), although the play contains a good deal of perfunctory clowning in contrast with mature verse and tragic overtones. Though the title-page of the early edition considers it a comedy, imprisonment, suffering, infidelity and a religious interest bring the play within the scope of tragicomedy. It is extremely difficult to affix even an approximate date to the play, but I regard it as certainly following The Duchess of Malfi (1614) and New and Choise Characters, of severall Authors ... Written by Syr Thomas Ouerburie (1615), both of which I think Middleton had read prior to writing this play. G.E. Bentley,[35] acknowledging the slenderness of the evidence, assigned the play to ca. 1615 on the basis of the entry in Sir Henry Herbert's office-book. It is a matter for speculation at which theatre the play was performed, but Bentley feels that a private theatre was most likely in view of the amount of singing and dancing. The King's men acted the play at Whitehall in 1624 (n.s.) on Twelfth Night, and there is something particularly fitting in this which will be noticed when Shakespeare's play of that name is considered in its relation to More Dissemblers. However, I have treated the play after A Fair Quarrel because it is not impossible that it was written after 1617 and, in style, in characterisation, it seems closer to the tragedies than does A Fair Quarrel.

No-one has yet succeeded in finding a source for any of the incidents in the play, although prototypes for some of the characters have been pointed out. Karl Christ[36] was for once at a loss to account for this play's

35. Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 888-889.
36. Quellenstudien, p.100.

genesis, and referred only to Sir A.W. Ward.[37] Ward thought that S. Carlo Borromeo, a Milanese cardinal who lived from 1538 to 1584, was in Middleton's mind when he drew the picture of the Lord Cardinal of Milan. Hugo Jung[38] brought forward Launcelot Gobbo as the original inspiration for Dondolo, Middleton's clown ; and R.H. Barker[39] proposed the Duchess of Malfi as "remarkably similar" to the Duchess of More Dissemblers in one scene at least.

One source, however, for some of the incidents in this play is Bandello's "Novella XXXVI" of La Seconda Parte De Le Novelle, Lucca. M.D. LIII, a story of how "Nicuola, being enamoured of Lattantio, goeth to serve him, clad as a page, and after many adventures, marrieth him ; with that which befell a brother of hers." This story accounts for a good deal of the incidents concerning Lactantio, the Governor of the Fort, and the Page who is Lactantio's mistress in disguise. Aurelia and her father have perhaps slight hints for their development contained in the Bandello story. There were other versions of this story, which itself was derived from Gl'Ingannati (1537) of the Academy of the Intronati at Siena.[40] Gl'Ingannati was followed closely by Bandello, but he was responsible for renaming Flamminio "Lattantio". Versions deriving from Bandello are Belleforest's Histoires Tragiques (1580), iv, Istoire LXI, a French translation of Bandello, and Barnaby Rich's story "Of Apollonius and Silla" in Rich his farevvell to Militarie profession (1594). This latter story is drawn upon by Shakespeare for his Twelfth Night (1601), but itself is not used by Middleton ; and the Belleforest version adds nothing fresh except the usual tedious embellishments—exempla from myth and history, letters in full, and so on.

37. A History of the English Dramatic Literature (London, 1899), II, 507.
38. Das Verhältnis Middletons zu Shakespere, p.81.
39. Thomas Middleton, p.98.
40. See G. Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, II, 270.

Bandello's story concerns Nicuola, daughter of Ambrogio Nanni ; Ambrogio is a merchant of some substance, father of two children, Nicuola and Paolo, who resemble each other a great deal. During the sack of Rome by the Germans and Spaniards in 1527, the three are separated, and when Ambrogio begins to make up his fortunes again after the war, only Nicuola can be found and ransomed, with whom he goes to live in Iesi. In Iesi there lives a great friend of his, a widower named Gerardo Lanzetti, who falls deeply in love with Nicuola and asks Ambrogio for her hand in marriage, being willing to take her without dowry. Ambrogio, discouraged by the fact that Gerardo is "più vicino assai â i 60 anni che â i 50," temporizes. Meanwhile Nicuola sees and exchanges letters with Lattantio Puccini, a handsome young man of twenty, but before the friendship can blossom Ambrogio must depart for Rome, whereupon he determines to send Nicuola to a relatives house in Fabriano. Nicuola is unable to communicate any of this to Lattantio, and he is unable to glean any information as to her whereabouts. Consequently, he directs his attentions elsewhere, to Gerardo Lanzetti's daughter Catella, of whom he soon becomes passionately enamoured. At this point Bandello adds a warning to young girls about young men who are fickle and changeable, and from this hint Middleton probably developed his cruel, egoistic sexual opportunist.

Nicuola returns home with her father, still as desirous as ever to continue her love affair with Lattantio, only to find that she has been forgotten. Later, when she is dwelling in a nunnery, Nicuola learns that Lattantio is in need of a page, and having procured a boy's dress from Pippa, her foster-mother, she applies for the job under the name of Romulo. Lattantio is delighted with his new page, and shortly entrusts Romulo to the business of carrying favours and persuasive speeches to Catella. Romulo (Nicuola), not knowing what to do in this dilemma, returns to Pippa for advice. Pippa tells Nicuola to go back to the nunnery, and cannot believe that Lattantio has not recognized

her for a woman and used her accordingly. Nicuola decides to continue in Lattantio's service, and so applies herself to the task of wooing Catella by proxy. Gerardo Lanzetti, Catella's father, is a very rich man indeed, an added attraction for Lattantio ; but Catella is not much disposed to accept Lattantio's overtures.

Middleton begins his play at this point, making a number of changes to Lattantio and Catella, whom he introduces first. Lattantio is given the anglicized name Lactantio, and Catella rechristened Aurelia, a name Middleton possibly took from the S. Carlo Borromeo family history. The pair are engaged, but since Lactantio stands to gain a great deal from his uncle, the Cardinal of Milan, in whose palace he is living, by posing as a chaste young ascetic, he suggests to Aurelia that she disguise as a servant to the Lord Vincentio and thus make access to the cardinalic palace easy. Clearly Bandello's story has been departed from quite radically, but the later development of Catella makes an early change such as this imperative. Bandello's Catella falls in love with the go-between, Romulo, and of course when Paolo turns up, he is the mistaken recipient of Catella's love, a recipient who can return it. But Middleton has suppressed the brother of his girl-page, with the result that Aurelia is permitted to respond to Lactantio's advances. If he had followed Bandello at all closely, his play would have been a remaking of Twelfth Night. Of Aurelia and Lactantio together, however, we see remarkably little ; the plan to introduce Aurelia disguised as a man into the palace is enacted in I.ii., the page-girl having the task of introducing Aurelia in disguise. At once we realise that Lactantio is a complete hypocrite and dissembler, for the page informs him that she is pregnant. Middleton has taken the hint supplied by Pippa to begin the task of creating a thoroughly disagreeable wretch. Aurelia and Lactantio have one more scene together, Aurelia of course being disguised as a man ; she hints that she has forsaken "the general's love" and refused an old

man, "the governor of the fort", in preferring Lactantio, thus demonstrating her own unfaithful and fickle character. Although spirited, she is every whit as cunning and spoiled as Catella is. The love scene involving lovers both dressed in the garb of the same sex is of course thoroughly Middletonian, and may be compared to the scene in The Roaring Girl involving Mary disguised as a man.

Aurelia's father and the Governor of the Fort, who has requested Aurelia for wife, seem to be modelled on Ambrogio and Gerardo, especially as in the end the Governor of the Fort gets no wife—he is too old, an "old dried neat's tongue" (I.ii.190), as Lactantio calls him. These two penetrate Aurelia's disguise and haul her away, so that in fact Middleton does not have to develop the relationship much at all beyond Bandello's situation. Aurelia is imprisoned in the governor's fort and unable to communicate with Lactantio.

In III.i. we learn the truth as to how the girl-page came to follow Lactantio to the Cardinal's palace :

> When I left all my friends in Mantua,
> For your love's sake alone, then, with strange oaths
> You promised present marriage.
>
> (III.i.13-15)

Middleton has darkened the events in Bandello's narrative. Unlike Romulo, the page-girl has changed into a page's garb under false promises and has to the full advantage been exploited by Lactantio. The resourceful and love-stricken young girl of the Italian novel has been transformed into a slighted and abused little figure, who yet raises no complaint or protest against Lactantio's behaviour. Indeed, Lactantio quite brutally tells the page-girl that he has sworn forty such oaths of marriage to women ; he determines to place the girl in the care of his nurse who brought him up, presumably an echo of the part Pippa, Nicuola's nurse, plays in the Bandello story. However, this plan cannot be brought to fruition, as the wretched page-

girl is transferred through the Cardinal's mediation to the Duchess of Milan's service (IV.i.), and there she remains until her child is born. There is an utterly distasteful scene (V.i.), in which the girl's advanced pregnancy is used for an attempt at high comedy, and it is, as Bullen[41] remarks, "a pity that Middleton adopted so intolerably gross a device for discovering her condition to the Duchess." She is made to sing and dance during lessons from two humourous characters, instructors of these two arts, and during the dancing the labour pains are brought on.*

Lattantio's fickleness in forgetting Nicuola and transferring his affections to Catella is increased by Middleton to make his Lactantio more ambitious : he not only shifts from the page-girl to Aurelia, but again from Aurelia to the Duchess of Milan ; in this latter move he over-reaches himself in his enormous vanity and finds the Duchess has been dissembling herself in encouraging him, but only after he has lost Aurelia to Andrugio ("the general") ; thus, like Lattantio, he comes to marry the girl he had forgotten.

Catella in Bandello marries Paolo, Nicuola's physically similar brother, who has emerged from obscurity after disappearance in the sack of Rome ; Aurelia in Middleton marries Andrugio, a general home from the war with great success to his name, but only at the last minute, after Lactantio has rejected her. Andrugio accepts her promise of fidelity very drily indeed, with an amusing scepticism. The frailty of women and the hypocrisy and self-seeking of men make the atmosphere of this play very cynical indeed, in total contrast to the romantic and passion-filled narrative of the Italian. To have destroyed Lactantio for his overweening—perhaps at the hand of Andrugio—would have surely wrought a tragic

41. I, lxxvii.

* This device may be a repetition of a similar one in The Nice Valour (1616) ; see Appendix A.

ending for the girl-page, for Aurelia, and hence for Andrugio himself, although I doubt if we could grieve much over the death of any of the main characters.

The Duchess herself might well have begun as a study very similar to that of Webster's Duchess of Malfi, a comparison first made by Barker in discussing IV.ii. of More Dissemblers. Webster's Duchess is widowed, and promises staunchly (I.i.363) never to marry again ; however, she has made her gentlewoman, Cariola, privy to her love for Antonio, her steward. In I.i. she gives him audience, and gradually reveals her affection for him :

> so we
> Are forced to express our violent passions
> In riddles and in dreams, and leave the path
> Of simple virtue, which was never made
> To seem the thing it is not.
> (I.i.551-555)

Middleton's Duchess, having engineered a device whereby she has drawn Andrugio into her chamber, also reveals her love :

> Sir, in as plain truth
> As the old time walk'd in, when love was simple
> And knew no art nor guile, I affect you.
> (IV.ii.186-188)

Both widows are young and have close to them a Cardinal who is interested in the upright reputation for chastity and continence a lady widow should have :

> She is like the purest gold, only imploid for Princes meddals, she neuer receiues but one mans impression ; the large iointure moues her not, titles of honor cannot sway her.... the rest of her time therefore shee directs to heauen.... Shee ought to bee a mirrour for our yongest Dames, to dresse themselues by ...
> (A vertuous Widdow, in Overbury's New And Choise Characters [1615], L8-8v)

and both widows have a shrewd waiting-woman in their confidence, Cariola and Celia. But, as we know, Andrugio's desires are set on the worthless Aurelia.

From this same work, towards which some scholars believe Webster contributed some characters,[43] Middleton may well have gleaned suggestions for developing the Lattantio and Catella he found in Bandello : here is the character of A Dissembler :

> Vnto the eye he is pleasing ... hee baites craft with humility, and his countenance is the picture of the present disposition.... Hee allures, is not allur'd by his affections, for they are the brokers of his obseruation ... to the eye onely he is not visible.
> (C2v)

He allures : Lactantio is a charmer indeed, and neither Aurelia nor the page-girl ever loses her desire for him. Lactantio's personal tragedy is that he is too vain and conceited ever to be allured, and his final match is heavily underscored by irony. There is only a very crude justice in marrying him to his little mistress. The character of An Hypocrite (I1-I1v) suggests that Seeming puritie is the main deceit of the dissembling character, although given the extreme spiritual zeal of the Cardinal of Milan, Middleton was obliged to make his dissembler a religious hypocrite.

Sir A.W. Ward simply remarked "Was St. Carlo Borromeo in the writer's mind ?", and no-one has ever followed this suggestion up. Carlo Borromeo was an Italian Cardinal who lived 1538-84, becoming Cardinal of Milan in 1560. He was extremely devout and completely without guile or hypocrisy, and in 1610 he was canonized. There is no evidence as to whether Middleton had heard of him, and as to what he had heard of him, but the canonization of 1610 would certainly have brought the man into re-

43. See F.L. Lucas, The Complete Works of John Webster (New York, 1927), IV, 6-10.

cent news. An account of S. Carlo was available, in Italian, in 1610, entitled Vita Di S. Carlo Borromeo ... dal Dottore Gio. Pietro Giussano (Rome, 1610), and Middleton may have dipped into this work.[44] S. Carlo erected, in 1562, a Borromean College in Pavia dedicated to Justina, virgin and martyr, indicative of his whole outlook on sexual matters (B3^{v}). He had, in 1560, founded an academy of leading men, ecclesiastics, and secular men, which studied the reform of manners and the virtuous life, and published its exercices as the Notti Vaticane (A8). Giussano comments :

> Those exercises were not only of great use to S. Carlo, but also besides of no little ornament ; as they brought to him dignity, and strong authority in everyone's regard, in showing himself so much inclined, and alive to virtue, and towards exemplary persons.
> (A8)

This publishing of works on pious persons may account for the activities of Middleton's Cardinal :

> Have I approv'd
> Your constancy for this, call'd your faith noble,
> Writ volumes of your victories and virtues ?
> (II.i.110)

and

> The books that I have publish'd in her praise
> Commend her constancy.
> (III.i.264)

Moreover, S. Carlo had a sister, Camilla, who was wife and duchess of Principe Don Cesare Gonzaga, and who was widowed in 1575 ; she remained a widow until her death on 1 September 1582 (01). This period of seven years is exactly the length of time the Duchess of Milan

44. I have taken details also from Cesare Orsenigo, Life of St. Carlo Borromeo, trans. Rudolph Kraus (St. Louis and London, 1943).

has been a widow :

> And she has kept the fort most valiantly,
> To th'wonder of her sex, this seven year's day,
> And that's no sorry trial.
>
> (I.i.11-13)

(Seven, however, seems to be a magical number in this connection ; Olivia in Twelfth Night has vowed to mourn seven years for the death of her brother, and Lady Ager has been a widow seven years, and is "married to her vow", in A Fair Quarrel, II.i.110-113.) S. Carlo was also very anxious to promote advantageous matches for his family—indeed all his brothers and sisters made outstanding unions with the foremost Italian families—until the death of the promising Count Federigo in 1562 brought him to a realisation of "the instability and inconstancy of the empty shadows of the deceiving affairs of humanity" ($B2^{v}$). Certainly Middleton's Cardinal will put aside any scruples to make such a splendid match as that between the Duchess and his nephew.

S. Carlo lived and died in the strictest self-restraint, never going through any period of worldliness or taking any unchaste pleasure (Oo7). Just so the Cardinal of Milan has eschewed any sowing of wild oats :

> I that have ever been in youth an old man
> To pleasures and to women, and could never
> Love, but pity 'em,
> And all their momentary frantic follies.
>
> (I.ii.9-12)

But the case is by no means proven by these parallels, and if someone were to discover a tale, in which a noble lady named a man other than the one she had fallen for as a blind to her confessor, and then proceeded with her real beloved, it would probably make the Borromeo parallel untenable.

Launcelot Gobbo of The Merchant of Venice runs away from his master, and so does Dondolo in Middleton's play. Beyond that I can see no similarity at all, except that Dondolo is clearly intended to provide the light and amusing relief

Launcelot does. Actually Dondolo is Lactantio's go-between to his mistress, Aurelia, since Middleton has no interest in using the girl-in-disguise as suitor for her master. Dondolo, however, possesses a most superficial humour, and grows tedious enough before he has appeared in two scenes.

Samuel Schoenbaum found More Dissemblers the best-ordered play in the tragi-comic group.[45] He overlooks therefore the weaknesses of plot which prevent the Cardinal from learning of Lactantio's sexual predatoriness. Aurelia's father and the governor, and later the Duchess, know him for a dissembler, but no word of this reaches the Cardinal. Schoenbaum justly terms Lactantio a "most contemptible hypocrite" and a "brutal sexual opportunist", and in remarking the irony whereby the dissemblers find themselves where they were at the outset, he puts his finger on Middleton's purpose in transforming originally good characters into liars and self-deceivers. Catella and Lattantio do not deliberately hurt those they know to love them, as Aurelia does to Andrugio, and Lactantio to the page-girl ; the Duchess in Webster's play does not cover her desires by naming another man, and S. Carlo Borromeo did not bestow confidence on a worthless nephew. (The nephew he did initiate into pious ways and an ecclesiastic career turned out very well indeed.) Middleton wished to demonstrate how very little in fact the unrighteous gain from their deceitful practises in a deceitful world. Everyone, in fact, loses something he or she might have gained by being perfectly honest and altruistic.

Sir Henry Herbert saw Middleton's play on Twelfth Night in 1623/4, and noted that it was "the worst play that ere I saw" ; it was doubtless put on because of its themes of disguise and its amusing punishment of vanity. If Middleton had made the page-girl into a witty schemer who in fact controlled Lactantio without his being aware of it—a girl nearer to Nicuola in the source—the play might have been delightfully

45. "Middleton's Tragicomedies," p.13.

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comic. Yet Shakespeare's comedy based on a similar tradition of material suffered a similar verdict : "One of the weakest plays that ever I saw on the stage" said Pepys sourly in 1661. Herbert and Pepys were both indisputably wrong according to modern critical views.

SOURCES

Main Plot : Matteo Bandello, Story 36 of La Seconda Parte De Le Novelle (1554).
Other Plots : John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi (1614) ; ? hints from G.P. Giussano, Vita Di S. Carlo Borromeo (1610).

Contemplation of spectacular ruins is a thought-provoking occupation, releasing both idle speculation and worthwhile conjecture as to the splendour and purpose of the original. It can be a great waster of time and ingenuity, unless restoration is proposed ; and if at a later period inept reconstructers have inflicted further damage on the design, the ruin is best fenced off and left until some hint at the original plan comes to light. The Old Law is just such a literary "ancient monument", remaining only in a late quarto derived from a chaotic manuscript, the title-page of which hints at revision in its ascription to three men, and the stage-history of which is an obscure and vexing question. Not that restorers of original order have been lacking ; yet their efforts constitute a warning about the kind of time-wasting referred to above, to both writer and reader.

The bad quarto, the only early edition, appeared in 1656, ascribing the authorship to Massinger, Middleton and Rowley ; Baldwin Maxwell[46] proposed 1618 as the date of composition. G.E. Bentley[47] added fresh corroboration for this date, and no-one so far seems inclined to doubt that such a date is correct, for a good

46. Studies in Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger, p.145.
47. The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 890.

many reasons, such as style, probability of the collaboration of Middleton and Rowley at this date, and so on.[48] The company who performed the play at first may well have been the Duke of York's-Prince Charles's (I) company, of which Rowley was a leading member, as with A Fair Quarrel ; and if with R.H. Barker one is inclined to accept the impression that Massinger was not involved with the play, the problem of how it got into his hands for purposes of revision disappears. Massinger was with the King's men and contributed to the Lady Elizabeth's men's repertory at the time he possibly revised The Old Law[49] ; however, there was a good deal of connection between Prince Charles's company and the Lady Elizabeth's men, as the history of the two companies in Bentley's Jacobean and Caroline Stage indicates—for instance, an actor like William Barksted,[50] who probably had a part in The Old Law, was a Prince Charles's man who had come from the Lady Elizabeth's company. Of course, it is possible that Middleton is the connecting link, since he, like Massinger, wrote for the King's men, but prima facie it seems more likely that Rowley's collaboration indicates special dressing of the comic parts of Old Law for his own company. In the end, of course, Rowley became a King's actor, but it is unlikely that Massinger's putative revision of the play came about in that way. G.R. Price discusses the problem thoroughly in his article, although any such attempt to lay down too much as probable becomes in the end an ingenious balance of conjectures. If the Prince's men put on the play in ca. 1618, then it would have been performed at the Red Bull, an open-air theatre. This is quite concordant with the nature of the play, which in the fifth act requires plenty of room for a law

48. Except G.R. Price, "The Authorship and the Manuscript of The Old Law," HLQ (1953), XVI, no.2, 137, who admits that 1618 is, however, not "an impossible date."
49. G.R. Price, "Authorship and Manuscript," p.138.
50. G.R.Price, "Authorship and Manuscript," p.136.

court and a wedding procession.

It seems to be generally agreed that Massinger was not present when the play was first planned and written, but, without the particular sanction of Middleton or Rowley, came in later only as a reviser. In determining who planned what part of the action, it certainly makes for simplicity if only two men need to be taken into account. As before, Middleton seems to have planned the serious plot, involving Cleanthes, Hippolita, Leonides and Simonides, and Rowley the humorous action concerning Gnothos, Agatha and the Courtesan. The relative remoteness of the various sources strongly suggests that Middleton was the deviser of the central situation whereby men of eighty and women of sixty must die at those years.

R.H. Barker[51] wrote the best study of the allocation of scenes to the two collaborators, in that he offered the most evidence. By comparison, E.C. Morris's[52] older article is full of circular argument and unsupported conclusion. Although Morris begins by laying out a table of metrical idiosyncrasies for each of the collaborators, he soon reveals a partiality for Middleton's work and begins to rely on a species of impressionism. Between Barker and Price there is fundamental agreement on the division of the plot ; Dewar M. Robb[53] records his impression that Middleton planned the whole play. The scenes on which the scholars agree are as follows :

Middleton : II.ii.; III.ii.; IV.ii.
Rowley : II.i.; III.i. (Price thinks this is Middleton) ; IV.i.; V.

By giving, with Barker, III.i. to Rowley, it makes the Gnothos plot all his ; the crude jest on Pollux/Bollux is exactly the type of joke or

51. Thomas Middleton, pp.184-189.
52. E.C. Morris, "On the Date and Composition of The Old Law," PMLA, XVII (1902), 1-70.
53. "The Canon of William Rowley's Plays," pp.136-137.

word-play we meet in IV.i., when Gnothos plays on Hiren/Siren. Act I seems to be a joint effort of the two, although a look at the work done on source material indicates that Middleton was largely responsible for the opening, at least up to line 70. Price is in agreement with this verdict. Massinger may have added to any or all scenes, but it is never clear that he wrote any speech which directs the action forward. The crop of Greek terms and proper names which occur in the speeches of the First and Second Lawyers (I.i.46-49) come mainly from North's Plutarch, Life of Solon and Life of Lycurgus (1612 ed., on siggs. E, F, and I), a type of allusive borrowing noticeable in Middleton's later work. Thus the play was, when originally performed, about half Rowley's work and half Middleton's.

The question of what sources Middleton knew for the well-known motif of a law condemning aged people to death is indeed vexing ; the comic subplot of Gnothos and Agatha presents no difficulty. Karl Christ[54] did the main work here, but since he felt The Old Law was early work (1599)—it is curious how the conviction that this and Hengist were early and immature has conditioned critical response—and therefore not worth an over-detailed survey, following the tracks of his research is rewarding and illuminating. Unless stated otherwise, Christ is the first discoverer of any tale or account mentioned in the following analysis.

In the Geography of Strabo (45 B.C.-A.D. 25), the early Greek writer, there is mention of a certain Greek leader named Evander, the name which Middleton gave to his Duke of Epire (or Epirus). Talking about the founding of Rome, Strabo says that Evander brought a colony from Arcadia, with whom Hercules stayed after the episode of the Cattle of Geryon. Evander's mother, Nicostrata, had prophesied the deification of Hercules ; and so it came about that an altar was at that time erected to him and sacrifice made. This material could be read in Greek and Latin in Isaac Casaubon's edition of

54. Quellenstudien, pp.100-104.

the Geography (1587), Book V, p.159, or in Alfonso Buonacciuobi's Italian translation of 1562, p.95. It has not a great deal to do with The Old Law, but it is the link which connects Evander with the destruction of aged people, as the next piece of evidence reveals. (Of course, it is quite possible Evander simply means "good man", Eu-andros, as he turns out to be ; and Microcynicon shows that Middleton knew enough Greek to put names together from it.) A work by Marcus Verrius Flaccus, which survives in an abridgment by Sextus Pompeius Festus[55] (time of Augustus), called De Verborum Significatione, has a section headed "Sexagenarios." Middleton could have seen this in the edition of Joseph Scaliger, in Latin, of 1576. The section mentioned discusses the practice of hurling a sixty-year-old into the Tiber as a sacrifice to Ditus Pater. This sacrifice took place yearly among the early colonists of Rome, and persisted until the coming of Hercules, when it was discontinued. Instead, in satisfaction of the old rite, basket-work figures of men were thrown down, to make their way back to Greece by river and sea. (Scaliger thought the priests who launched the basket-work effigies recited this origin for form's sake.) Now comes the interesting part : 'another tradition recounts that after the city was freed from the Gauls, men of sixty began to be thrown into the river to conserve food supplies. One of these men, concealed by a filial and pious son, was often useful in counsel to the country through the person of the son. The best tradition, says Festus, was that which suggested :

> in the time they first began to bear across the bridge a voting tablet to the Assembly, the younger men demanded that the sixty-year-olds be thrown down from the bridge, as they could now perform no public function, so that they,

55. The original text, the Festus Fragment of the Codex Farnesianus L.XIX, Qu. XV, 8 (144), can be read on p.334 of K.O. Mueller's edition (Leipzig, 1839).

> rather than these, might by themselves choose the Emperor.
>
> (Scaliger, p.254)

Here we have the motive for throwing old men into the river—uselessness and consumption of younger people's food—and the envious, overweening arrogance of the young senators. Also, the incident of the dutiful son concealing his father is touched upon, and the original practice associated with Hercules and, as we know from Strabo, Evander. Cratilus, executioner for Evander in The Old Law, is instructed to lead each victim and "from the high promontory, / Cast him into the sea" (II.i.135-136). The reason is, as the statute puts it, that such old folk are "past their councils (which overgrown gravity is now run into dotage) to assist their country ; to whom, in common reason, nothing should be so wearisome as their own lives,—as it may be supposed, is tedious to their successive heirs, whose times are spent in the good of their country" (I.i.141-145). Here, then, are suggestions for Evander, the three courtiers, Cleanthes, the wise old men Creon, Lysander and Leonides, and the concealment of Leonides. It seems to me fairly certain that Middleton knew something of these stories of Roman history, perhaps from his schooldays, perhaps from Joseph Scaliger. Sixty, incidentally, remains the age of death in all the sources considered, so that eighty for the men and sixty for the women is Middleton's addition to the original material.

Much closer to The Old Law, however, is a Latin cycle of stories concerning Dolopathos, also known as the Historia septem sapientum (ca. 1200), written down by Dom Jehans (Jean), a monk of the Abbaye d'Hauteselve or Hauteseille. He is generally catalogued as "Jean de Hauteseille". The Century Cyclopedia says that "the subject and style both show Oriental influence. It is a form of the old Eastern romance The Seven Wise Men (known also as the Book of Sindibad)."[56] What version of this Middleton might

56. The New Century Cyclopedia of Names, ed. Clarence L. Barnhart (New York, 1954), I. This entry is in reference to the metrical version of Herbers, a 13th century trouvère, who used Jean de Hauteseille's history.

have seen is difficult to say ; the modern edition is that of Alfons Hilka (Heidelberg, 1913), where the relevant story is printed on pp.57-61. It is necessary to consider with this history the Italian novella based on it, the hundredth tale of the Libro Di Novelle, Et Di Bel Parlar Gentile, a collection of a hundred tales edited by Carlo Gualteruzzi (1572). At first sight anyone would say that the Italian tale, No. 100, entitled "How a King through the ill counsel of his wife killed the old men of the realm" was undoubtedly the immediate source ; yet it lacks details common to Jean de Hauteseille and The Old Law. Here is an outline of the Frenchman's narrative :

A young king, left his kingdom by his father's death, was still an adolescent. As a result of a long siege and consequent famine, he passed a measure advocated by his youthful counsellors that all the aged, men and women, should be executed. (The siege takes us back to Festus, and I have no doubt this Roman story lies somewhere not far behind Jean de Hauteseille's account.) The old men and women could not defend the city and were consuming valuable food. In the slaughter, fathers discovered that their severest enemies were their own sons. Only one old man escaped, because he was hidden in a cave by his duteous son, whose wife, who had to be told, swore with an oath she would keep the secret. After the siege, the youthful king and counsellors let public morals go and corruption spread everywhere, together with injustice and tyranny on the part of the government. But the young man who had concealed his father began to offer the good counsel, in his own person, of his father. (Again, an indication that Jean knew Festus' account.) As morals were reformed, the young man grew to favour, and he was promoted to be a judge ; now, plotting against him by the unreformed young counsellors began. Their eventual plan was to petition for a public occasion on which subjects were to bring to court their best friend, worst enemy, best jester and most faithful servant. The young man knew he would have to par-

ticipate, and went to his father for advice ; the trick was clearly designed to compel the young man to bring his father out as his best friend, and then he could be accused of not having conformed to the law. The father told the son to take his dog, his wife, his baby son and his ass to the palace, which he did, and after praising the dog as constant in friendship, the ass as uncomplaining at work, the child as unaffectedly delightful in responses, the young man merely began to say his wife was his worst enemy when she immediately burst out, accusing her husband of ingratitude, especially in the matter of the trouble she had taken with her concealed father-in-law. The young man could only point to this betrayal as the kind of insidious enemy a wife is, who with the provocation of a single phrase had given away her husband's life. The King admitted to himself the subtle planning behind this revelation, pardoned the young man and honoured the father. Before his death, the old man was able to bring back good customs, peace and a moral rearmament movement.

The Old Law has a great deal in common with this history. It is true that there is no immediate cause of the statute such as a war, but thereafter the pattern is the same. The sons are guilty of parricide, save Cleanthes, who hides his father Leonides and entrusts the secret to his good and faithful wife Hippolita. The realm grows steadily more and more corrupt ; we witness a parish clerk accept money to falsify the birth register ; we see corruption in the three foppish, cowardly young courtiers, until Cleanthes is moved to administer stern lectures to Lysander, Simonides and Eugenia. In revenge, Simonides and Eugenia hatch a plot whereby they reveal the hiding place of Leonides to the Duke ; Hippolita has, in a moment of compassion, revealed the secret to Eugenia because she was tricked into believing the young wife had a wish to preserve her old husband's life in a similar manner. So Leonides is led off to execution and Cleanthes brought to court to be judged by the young and malicious courtiers,

who arrive in court prepared to condemn him. Suddenly Evander halts the proceedings and brings in the old men, still alive ; Cleanthes is made judge over his erstwhile condemners, and reads out Evander's reformed decree in which maturity and virtue are the tests for the inheritance of paternal wealth and office.

It is evident that economic causes could not have been responsible for the original statute if it was to turn out to be the whim of one of the Jacobean drama's "politic" dukes, who test the realm's morals by a subterfuge of some kind. So Middleton cut the motif of a war or siege, and made the statute arbitrary. Likewise, he cut the scene in which the wife blurts out the secret in anger, so that he could build up suspense by putting the revelation of the secret in much earlier (II.ii.). As a result, Hippolita becomes a study in well-meaning weakness—forsworn in order to help someone in distress—and Eugenia a study in hard, selfish vanity who enjoys the manipulation of power through sex. Her method is to win friends in high places by her use of the promised sexual favour. It appears she is entirely Middleton's addition to the tradition and a brilliant sketch indeed for later vicious and promiscuous, though attractive, young women. In III.ii. there is a masterly exchange between Eugenia and Cleanthes, in which justified righteousness and insolent corruption clash (11.258-271), a first draft for the brilliant scene in which Leantio and Bianca confront each other, after they have each taken new partners, in Women Beware Women. The pathetic Hippolita is almost a totally new creation out of the sharp-tongued wife of Jean de Hauteseille. The undramatic business of the dog, ass, child and wife is understandably cut.

The hundredth novel of Gualteruzzi's collection tells of a young king who killed all his old men of sixty and above at his wife's desire. Her motive was the wish to remove, in the general slaughter, a wise old counsellor of the king who was preventing her from dominating her husband completely. But the young king had

a nightmare in which he was buried alive ; so that, his own young counsellors being totally unable to help, he was constrained to send into the next kingdom for experienced counsel to interpret it. The advice sent back was that the young king should call on his subjects to bring their friend, enemy and jester to court, and as a result the truth contained in the dream would be revealed. One young man had preserved his father by concealment in a secret room, and had later let his wife into the secret when she grew suspicious. This old man bade his son take wife, child and dog to court ; the son there presented the dog as consistently faithful, the child as pleasing and without vices, and his wife as perverse and shrewish. As in the source tale, the wife burst out angrily that, among other things, she had looked after the illegally preserved old man. The king at once sent for the old man, and asked him the meaning of the nightmare. An explanation indeed follows, though to the modern reader it is curiously unexplanatory ; the upshot, however, was that any old men still alive in the realm were pardoned and set in a place of honour.

To my mind this Italian tale has a good deal less to do with The Old Law than Jean de Hauteseille's story told by the third wise man. The introduction of a wife for the king is irrelevant to Middleton's version ; the cause of the slaughter is less plausible. The crafty, immoral young courtiers have disappeared to make room for the wicked wife, and so the ultimate reform of the realm is never much in question. Indeed, the young wife disappears from the narrative after killing the aged men of the realm.

Finally, in considering the origins of the main plot, mention must be made of Herbers' metrical version (1210) in middle French[57] of the Dolopathos story. Herbers makes the young man who conceals his father into a little-regarded member of the court nobility (p.229),

57. Li Romans De Dolopathos, ed. Charles Brunet and Anatole De Montaiglon (Paris, 1856), pp.225-240.

but he never strays far from his Latin source. Certainly this is not an intermediate version between Jean de Hauteseille and the Italian novella, but rather a branch-line. Middleton surely did not know this redaction.

Jean de Hauteseille was, according to G.L. Gomme,[58] translating from Hebrew, and his work was apparently first printed in 1490, at Cologne.[59] Gomme goes on to say that it was through this version that in 1520 a translation came into English, printed by Wynkyn de Worde. Yet the story of the king and the slaying of the old men is not in it, nor in any later English version such as W. Copland's The seuen wyse Maysters of Rome (1555). Yet it is difficult to escape the impression that an English translation, now lost, was published before The Old Law.

Karl Christ's diligence in seeking out the source for the main plot, it goes without saying, is first-rate, pioneer work. Yet he missed the source for the subplot, by Rowley, which concerns Gnothos and Agatha. This is Barnaby Rich's tale "Of Gonsales and his vertuous wife Agatha" in his collection Rich's Farewell To Military Profession (1581), based on Cinthio's Hecatommithi III.5. I had just decided that Rowley must have known Rich's (or Cinthio's) tale when I discovered T.M. Cranfill[60] had reached the same conclusion. He was unable to determine whether the Italian or English was the immediate source. Two reasons for answering that the English was are worth considering : first, the name Gonsales is nearer to Gnothos than Cinthio's form of it, Consalvo ; second, no-one has ever shown that Rowley could read Italian, or ever employs tales

58. The History Of The Seven Wise Masters Of Rome, ed. G.L. Gomme (London, 1885), pp.ii-iii.
59. I say "apparently" because the only edition I have seen is one printed at Antwerp, 1490. This does not have the tale as found in Alfons Hilka's edition.
60. In his edition of Rich's Farewell (Austin, Texas, 1959), p.xl.

from the Italian.

Rich's story tells of a young man with a good and loving wife, Agatha, who is almost killed by her husband in order that he may marry a courtesan named Aselgia. Almost : for Gonsales believes he has killed his wife with poison, but his physician-friend has in fact given him a heavy sedative instead. Likewise, Gnothos believes he has killed off Agatha by altering the date of her birth (III.i.1-112), but even though Agatha comically wanders about within a month of her death, Gnothos persists in regarding her as a virtual ghost and carries on an affair with a courtesan. Gonsales does remarry in fact, and is saved from execution on an indictment of uxoricide only by the intervention and supplication of the revived wife.

Gnothos is a delightful comic success, and may well have been played by Rowley himself. He appears in III.i., IV.i., and at V.I.432-627, the latter an hilarious occasion. Gnothos is on his way to his wedding, and poor Agatha is following the procession sorrowfully. The Duke, Evander, stops it, and asks a few questions. Gnothos, at first impatient, suddenly realises he is dealing with high authority. As E.C. Morris[61] puts it, "Falstaff himself has hardly bowed to authority and slapped it on the shoulder at the same time with better wit." Gnothos has it timed so that just as he is making his vows to Beatrice, Agatha will be dying, and so bigamy will be just avoided. The Court decides to punish Gnothos for "offering up a lusty able woman, / Which may do service to the commonwealth" (V.i.532-533) ; but Agatha pleads for him successfully. Gnothos, sorrowfully, blames the laws for his disappointment and with reluctance takes Agatha off home.

Clearly Agatha had to be advanced to fifty-nine for the purposes of the plot, and Gnothos made ridiculous. His attempt to murder his wife has therefore no serious element as in Rich. The Courtesan is not delineated at all, as Rich's

61. "On the Date and Composition of <u>The Old Law</u>," p.61.

Aselgia is, since there is not much room left in the farcical plot as a result of putting in the cast-off servants of Simonides' household. Yet there is much good humour in these characters, and no doubt they made the play a popular success. Revived today with some judicious cuts, the play would certainly evoke amusement and appreciation.

For the critics, Middleton's characters have constituted the high points of the play. Indeed, Eugenia is a very subtle example of Middleton's dominating female, although she is younger than such characters usually are. Yet she is a married woman, and one who therefore feels quite able to manipulate the men who are in need of what she has to offer :

> 'Tis dainty, next to procreation fitting ;
> I'd either be destroying men or getting.
> (IV.ii.265-266)

"The implications," comments Samuel Schoenbaum,[62] "lie in the workings of an inexorable universe in which frailty and evil—an Hippolita and a Eugenia—bring equal ruin upon themselves."

In these tragicomedies, all of them very imperfect works, we find Middleton moving towards an absolute which constitutes an "inexorable universe". In his comedies after 1604 we found a gradual decay of the stern morality of a play like The Phoenix ; the group of plays from 1610 to 1614 lacked a moral centre, although the mood of the dramatist was becoming darker ; and then, through the experience of exploring situations in which the individual is torn between an ideal and a human weakness, Middleton grew in understanding and power of expression. The Old Law is a striking example of the use of an old motif in a new way. The dramatist now continues to wander further and further afield in search of old tales which will yield moral dilemmas, the wrong solution to which may mean death in the next plays. As he began to use whole tales for plot materials, Middleton's

62. "Middleton's Tragicomedies," p.11.

art improved The tragicomedies we have just looked at rarely stay close to a source for long, and the result is all too frequently improbability and diffuseness.

SOURCES

Main Plot : Jean de Hauteseille, Dolopathos sive De rege et septem sapientibus (ca. 1200), probably in a later printed text.[63] The tale is that of the third wise man ; Sir Thomas North, Plutarch (1612), Lives of Lycurgus and Solon.

Subplot : Barnaby Rich, Rich's Farewell to Military Profession (1581), Sixth Tale.

63. More information about the text Middleton may have had access to is to be found in George Ellis, Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances (London, 1805), III, 11-17. "Soon after the invention of printing," writes Ellis, "the Latin 'Historia Septem Sapientum' appeared in Germany, and there were many editions of it without date, place, or printer's name. The earliest, perhaps, which occurs with a date, was printed at Cologne by John Hoelhoff, in 1490, quarto, with cuts.... The last European imitation ... belongs to the Italians, and was first printed at Mantua, 1546, duodecimo, under the title of 'Erasto ...' (pp.15-16). This book has a tale, chapter XII, about an old man wedded to a young wife who could not control her desires, which bears some relation to the plot concerning Lysander and Eugenia in The Old Law.

CHAPTER SIX

Terror without Pity : New Tragedy out of Old Tales

When Middleton began to write tragedy, he was undoubtedly aware of the magnitude of Shakespeare's achievement in the genre. Middleton did not try to imitate Shakespeare or Webster in their own day, but he waited until he was himself ready to attempt tragedy and actually punish the sinners in his plays with death. Characters in A Fair Quarrel and The Old Law had certainly come close to death, but only Antonio of The Witch had actually come to a violent end.

In treating Middleton's three tragedies, one enters upon familiar, well-trodden ground, much better documented and commented upon than any other phase of his writing. Hengist, King of Kent and The Changeling have been edited in single editions with critical apparatus, and an edition of Women Beware Women is even now under way. These three plays are major achievements, two of which are still frequently performed. As a result, my task is much simpler than hitherto ; it lies merely in working over the scholarship to date, adding a small amount of my own research, and fitting these mature plays into the pattern of characterisation which Middleton had cultivated.

Hengist, King of Kent is Middleton's sole history play, and it was written about 1619 ; R.C. Bald[1] in his edition gives limits of 1616-20. The Interregnum descriptions of the play as a "comedy" and a "tragedy" are as correct as the classification "history" ; only the influence of Macbeth justifies our thinking of Hengist as a historical tragedy, or rather history manipulated to shape tragedy. One of the faults of Bald's excellent edition is that he fails to show how Macbeth conditioned the material Middleton chose for treatment. Both plays

1. Hengist, King of Kent, ed. R.C. Bald (New York and London, 1938), p.xiii.

are tragedies of ambition which involve the murder of a good and innocent king (Duncan, Constantius), the murder of lesser men to clear the real murderer, the flight of two brothers in line for the throne so that they may avoid a similar fate (Malcolm and Donalbain, Aurelius and Uther), the return of the brothers with an army, and the destruction of the tyrant in a fortress where he believes himself safe. Both plays are heavily indebted to The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1577) by Raphael Holinshed, and both were performed by the King's men. It is no coincidence that Middleton and Shakespeare both used Holinshed ; it seems clear that Middleton modelled this one play as closely as he could on Shakespeare's poetic study of the theme of the evil of vaulting ambition. The critical neglect of Hengist is a little hard to understand, especially as Middleton is the only writer of tragedy to approach Shakespeare closely in technique. The lack of appreciation of the subplot of Hengist as a structure parallel to the main plot, and of the success with which it is used to bring out the difference in Vortiger's and Hengist's attitude to the populace, is also hard to understand. A close examination of the sources of Hengist reveals that Middleton worked carefully and expertly with his material, arranging a final symbolic holocaust to consume the villains with the least violence to the historical record.

In this case, the work on the sources has really been done for any later investigator by Karl Christ[2] and R.C. Bald.[3] Karl Christ cleared up misconceptions created by Gerard Langbaine, who in Momus Triumphans (1688) said that Hengist's source was "Ranulph. Cestrensis Polychronicon" and in The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets (1699) named "Du Chesne, Stow, Speed" as the sources. The mistake Langbaine made in Momus Triumphans was due to a remark uttered by Raynulph, monk of Chester, at the very beginning of the play :

2. Quellenstudien, pp.4-20.
3. Edition, pp.xiii-xxiii and 127-136.

What Raynulph Munck of Chester Can
Raise from his policronicon....
(First Chorus, ll.1-2)

Raynulph Higden's Polychronicon (translation by John Trevisa printed 1480 and 1482, Latin text printed in 1527) was certainly not the source for the bulk of Middleton's historical material. In any event, The Chronicle of Robert Fabyan (1516) is based so closely on Higden in the Vortiger narrative that it would be hard to separate the two. Richard Grafton's A Chronicle at large ... of Englande (1562) again can be shown to be verbally indebted to Fabyan, whom Grafton lists as an authority he has used along with "Polichronicon". R.C. Bald (edition, p.xxxviii), citing Karl Christ, says that the 1516 edition of Fabyan has a sidenote stating that Thong Castle is not far from Queenborough, a remark which caused Middleton to allow Hengist, builder of Thong Castle, to be able to visit Simon, Mayor of Queenborough, so easily. Thus, because in fact Middleton knew Fabyan's chronicle, it is easy to assume that he knew the substance of Higden's. Obviously this need not be true. Langbaine's guesses at Du Chesne, Stow and Speed are not very helpful either. Neither Stow nor Speed contains sufficient information about Vortiger to account for facts in the play, though the first edition of André Du Chesne's Histoire d' Angleterre, d' Ecosse et d' Irlande (Paris, 1614) may have had sufficient ; the only text available in England is the second edition of the Histoire (1634), which lacks a number of incidents found in Middleton's play. Whatever Du Chesne had in the 1614 version, Raphael Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotlande and Irelande (1577) are definitely the likeliest texts to have come into Middleton's hands. The forms of the names in Hengist bespeak borrowing from Holinshed, especially the form "Roxena" for the daughter of Hengist, which appears in the Historie of Scotlande. Hengist and Horsus are usually found as brothers : for example in Polydore Vergil's Anglica Historia (1556), and in Holinshed, who calls them "two brethren" (p.111). Fabyan

and Grafton with some vagueness call them "brother or cosin" to each other. Holinshed, then, is not the only source, although the story of Vortiger, Hengist, Horsus and Roxena comes substantially from him. The other source seems to have been Fabyan. Of course, enough Elizabethans had treated the story to make the name Vortiger, in that form, familiar ; but even The Mirror for Magistrates, which has a fairly full account, states that Vortiger sent for the Saxons, whereas in the play they simply arrive. Holinshed, being the excellent comparative historian he is, relates both accounts of their arrival.

Middleton followed Holinshed from p.109 of the Chronicles onwards, from the point where Constantine the father of Constantius is murdered by a Pict. Middleton's Vortiger has Constantius fetched from the Abbey of Winchester and crowned against his protests (I.i.). Constantius is developed far beyond anything in the records ; he is a cross between a weakling and an unworldly saint of great spiritual integrity. "The vexations contrived by Vortiger to bedevil the King are barely suggested by Holinshed," writes Samuel Schoenbaum,[4] and he enumerates the clamorous petitioning of Constantius, the pressure put upon him to marry, and the compulsory feasting on a fast-day (I.ii.). The verse Middleton gives to Constantius is consistently grave and gentle :

> Heeres a wish'd howre for Contemplation now ;
> All still and silent, this is a true Kingdome.
> (I.ii.124-125)

In this first act Middleton adds a character foreign to all the Chronicles : Castiza, fiancée of Vortiger, named after the girl in The Phoenix and, perhaps, The Revenger's Tragedy. She is chaste and loyal, but Vortiger, in a manner wholly typical of Middleton, attempts to persuade her to use her charm on the King, mainly to try his spirit. When the King, in parting from her, finally kisses her, having talked her into

4. Middleton's Tragedies (New York, 1955), p.77.

going into a nunnery, Vortiger finds himself consumed with jealousy. Thus early are we shown that, despite his lack of scruples in his political climb, Vortiger is no judge of his own emotions, and behaves cruelly or carelessly towards those to whom he should return affection. Vortiger's tragedy, like Macbeth's, is that he ends by losing all the love and honour—of the Lords, Castiza, even Simon—willingly given to him.

It is not long before Vortiger has Constantius murdered, having failed to unhinge his mind with vexations. In Holinshed, some Scots and Picts are suborned to murder Constantius ; Middleton employs a dumbshow at the end of II.i. with "2 Villaines" for the same purpose. In the dumbshow Castiza is haled from the nunnery and married to Vortiger, and Aurelius and Uther flee for their safety. The killers are violently despatched as unquestionably guilty, before they can protest, in the manner of the two guards of Duncan's chamber, and Vortiger is on the throne with the same insecure right as Macbeth. The Scottish-Pictish quarrel with the British is kept out of Middleton's version for economy's sake, since the discontented British populace alone is enough to shake Vortiger's throne. In the very next scene he hears of the arrival of the Saxon fleet ; immediately Hengist and Horsus address themselves to him. Middleton followed Holinshed's second account of the chance arrival of the Saxons (p.112), or perhaps Fabyan's, as Bald indicates. (In Higden, the Saxons are invited—more proof that the Polychronicon is not the source for Hengist.) Hengist, "a man of great wit, rare policie, and high wisdome", asks for a little territory, "soe little / As yond poore hide will Compasse" (II.iii.39-40), pointing to a hide Simon the tanner is carrying. Holinshed in the Historie of England has no mention of this hide, and the business of the derivation of Thong Castle stems ultimately from Geoffrey of Monmouth, goes on through Higden, and was probably taken by Middleton from Fabyan, or less probably, from Holinshed's Historie of Scotland. It is, I think, an excellent dramatic stroke to introduce Simon in this manner, who in his comic unlettered way is as ambitious and power-

seeking as Hengist. Hengist thereafter is always glad to hear of Simon's success, and Middleton is enabled to comment on the common people's reaction to politics : Hengist, be he Saxon or British, is welcome to Simon so long as he has the interests of the Queenborough townsfolk at heart. Hengist's ambitions carry him to the high point of winning three provinces of England, but in the end, his emotions, his concern for Roxena, cause him to manoeuvre himself into a lost position. And Simon, with Oliver the Puritan in his power, too rashly hazards his dignity with the cheating players.

After Hengist has won a plot of ground in Kent, he determines to send over for more Saxons, including Roxena, his daughter. In Middleton no space is wasted on a scene where Hengist first persuades the King to agree, as in Holinshed. Horsus tells us, in an aside, that he has been intimate with Roxena, though she still passes for a pure virgin. All this part of the action is unhistorical—i.e. non-Chronical history—and is either taken from a romance I shall presently mention, or perhaps from the lost Valteger (Bald, p.xviii) of Henslowe. Critics have held that the sexual intrigue—the triangle of Vortiger, Horsus and Roxena—gets out of hand and distorts the play ; it is certainly sensational material.

Roxena and the Saxons arrive at once (II.iii.), and Holinshed indicates that Hengist had in mind from the first that Roxena might make a conquest of the "concupiscent" Vortiger (p.112). A Saxon gentleman reports that Roxena drank a health to Vortiger from a golden cup on her arrival, and that he is greatly affected with a desire for the girl. This incident is based on the tradition of the first wassail in England, but Middleton has relegated it to a report because he wants to leave space in the third act for the removal of Vortiger's first wife. In Holinshed the emphasis is on Hengist's craftiness in arranging the banquet at which the wassail was given, on Vortiger's blindness when faced with "sensuall lust", and on Rowen's innocence. Vortiger is made less a dupe than a wilful self-server in Middleton's telescoped account of Vor-

tiger's infatuation with Roxena. "Shortly after," adds Holinshed, "he forsooke his owne wife, by the which he had three sonnes, named Vortimerus, Catagrinus, and Pascentius, and requyred of Hengist to haue his daughter, the sayde Rowen, or Ronowen in mariage" (p.113). The price is Kent for Hengist, but Horsus collapses with emotion and jealousy when Hengist accepts the earldom. Such a conflict of emotions likewise overcomes Leander in Walter Hawkesworth's Leander (acted 1598), IV.iii., and he too swoons. Roxena puts it down to epilepsy, and assures the court that a virgin's hand stroked over the heart will cure the fit. Middleton's Roxena, a barbarian portrait of the sexually-initiated young beauty, is nothing if not quick in intelligence, and such women, as Holinshed notes, "oftentimes bringeth wise men to destruction." In III.i. Roxena makes it clear to Horsus that she intends merely to use Vortiger as a "shelter to keepe shame vnknownen" (1.29). This scene seems to be entirely Middleton's addition as far as present knowledge goes, and certainly it seems to be stamped all over with his preoccupations—cuckoldry and cunning lust. Horsus agrees to remove Castiza so that Roxena may step into her place (and her bed).

British reaction to Vortiger's increasing involvement with the Saxons is hostile, and it is not long before they crown Vortimer in his place. Vortiger had reigned sixteen years according to Holinshed, but as with Macbeth the whole time-scheme has been foreshortened. In a dumbshow at the beginning of IV.iii., Vortimer is first crowned and then murdered by two Saxons suborned for the purpose by Roxena. Vortiger is restored on condition he will drive out the Saxons, but Hengist arranges a parley before a drive for summary expulsion can prevail. From the beginning of act three to this point all the play has been devoted to the false rape and removal of Castiza, and to Simon's doings ; it almost stops being a history play at all during this period, and becomes a sexual intrigue instead. Horsus, whom Holinshed reports was slain as he slew Catagrinus at the battle of Epiford, lives on in Middleton's play, to die in Breigh Castle with

Roxena and Vortiger. Horsus is held over to torment Vortiger and point up the blindness which permits Vortiger to divorce himself from his virtuous queen and espouse the one woman he should have avoided for his peace of mind and place in the realm. Vortimer, in point of fact, reigned "sixe or seuen yeares and odde Monethes" (p.116), so that it is his reign which is most severely truncated.

In IV.iii. the parley takes place on Salisbury plain, described by Holinshed on pp.117-118, in which Hengist commits his treacherous stratagem : each side is to meet without weapons to discuss a truce, but the Saxons carry long knives and, at a signal, kill a Briton each, excepting the King who is to be ransomed. Vortiger, shocked, asks Hengist whether he did not have reason to be grateful to him ; Hengist's answer is that he worked for and earned his own advancement and that his daughter is queen only for the satisfaction of Vortiger's desires. The King has to surrender Norfolk and Suffolk in addition to his sovereignty over Kent before he is freed. He decides to flee into Wales with his queen, and Horsus loyally insists on following.

The tragic ending is set by this decision, as it gives the exiled Aurelius and Uther their opportunity to return with forces to destroy the usurping Vortiger. In the various Chronicles Vortimer's reign interrupts Vortiger's, and hence Vortiger's restoration by the populace would seem to weaken any analogy with a Macbeth-figure who becomes steadily more and more detested. So Middleton reduces Vortimer's reign to a brief dumbshow— in effect disposes of it—although there is reason to believe that in Henslowe's Valteger Vortimer played a far more significant part (Bald, p.xviii). In V.ii. Vortiger is besieged in Breigh Castle, and in his distress falls to accusing Horsus of ill counsel ; Horsus replies by telling him the truth about Roxena and himself. In the doomed castle scene, Middleton had a free hand to allow Vortiger and Horsus to stab each other, since they were going to die in the historical fire anyway. None of the Chronicles makes it clear whether Vortiger's queen was with him, so again Middleton felt free to include her tragedy of

ambition in the holocaust. Indeed, she contributes to the significance of the Doomsday fire, a fire which is the

> greate M^r^peece of Consumation,
> The end of time, w^ch^ must Consume even ruin
> And eate that into Cinders
> (IV.ii.8-10)

and seems like a physical extension of the burning passion which Roxena has inflamed first in Horsus and then in Vortiger. Middleton naturally does not wish to leave Hengist at large, or to keep the wronged Castiza permanently cast out from all happiness ; thus he is constrained to adjust history again, and fetch the fearful Hengist in search of his daughter to Breigh Castle. There Aurelius and Uther capture him and sentence him to death. Holinshed writes that just after the burning of Vortiger Hengist was taken at the battle of Maesbell (p.122) and beheaded ; and adds that there is another tradition to the effect that Hengist lived on for two more years, dying at the battle of the River Dun. John Speed[5] mentions that Gildas, Bede and Ethelward have no record at all of Hengist dying on the field. Holinshed's dates indicate that Vortiger died in 481, and the earliest attribution of Hengist's death is 487, so that Middleton undoubtedly telescoped events. As for any Chronicler mentioning that Vortiger's first wife (called by Middleton Castiza) married Aurelius, if it is a fact it has escaped me, and R.C. Bald before me. In the quarto version (1661) the play ends with Hengist's capture, and Bald believes this is a cut text which is represented in full by the two extant manuscripts. The reason he gives has to do with the fact that Rowley's Birth of Merlin starts with the marriage of Aurelius to the Saxon maid Artesia (p.xxxv) ; probably the two plays were put on in close conjuntion at some time. My own view is that the manuscript ending, which establishes the restoration of "Truths plantation in this Land for ever" (V.ii.284), is taken from the Elizabethan

5. The History of Greate Britaine (1611), p.291.

romance The Aduentures of Ladie Egeria (ca. 1585), at the very end of which the virtuous Egeria marries Travenna, the wronged lord who has returned to thrust out the corrupt Lampanus, once King and husband to Egeria.

Roxena sees a frightful vision of the poisoned Vortimer in the flames as she dies (V.ii. 146-149), a detail not in Holinshed or any Chronicle. Now the prophetic dream or vision is nearly always a prelude to bloodshed, especially in the Italianate tradition, but not in Macbeth. Although R.C. Bald (p.xxii) calls attention to the manuscript play Fatum Vortigerni which has an appearance of Vortimer's ghost to Roxena, I much prefer to explain its presence as a faint echo of Lady Macbeth's terror-stricken remorse. That Middleton knew Macbeth seems without question when a parallel like the following can be adduced :

> Look like th'innocent flower,
> But be the serpent under't.
> (I.v.64-65)

says Lady Macbeth to her husband in regard to the treacherous stabbing of Duncan which is to follow. Just so Hengist, when dealing out knives for the treacherous slaughter of the British lords, says

> Lurke like ye snake vnder ye innocent shade
> Of a spread sommers leafe.
> (IV.iii.24-25)

Now Macbeth appears first in the Folio of 1623, so some explanation must be found of Middleton's having had an opportunity to read the play.[6] It seems quite probable he read it in order to introduce more witch material into it for the King's Men, some time between writing The Witch (1614) and the appearance of Macbeth in 1623. Since in the opinion of others besides myself,

6. See A Game at Chesse, ed. R.C. Bald (Cambridge, 1929), pp.15-16, where he claims Middleton was "thoroughly familiar" with Macbeth.

Irving Ribner[7] for example, Hengist is Middleton's tragedy of ambition after Macbeth, we can suppose a deliberate attempt on Middleton's part to cultivate a type of drama close to Shakespeare's, albeit a new kind of tragedy which is not at all a pastiche of the master's work.

The Aduentures of Ladie Egeria, by W.C. "Maister of Art", tells the story of a foolish but tyrannical monarch, Duke Lampanus. He has a beautiful and chaste wife, Egeria, whom he thrusts from him on a suspicion (implanted by the lying flatterer, Andromus) of adultery with Lord Travenna. Andromus contrives to introduce Eldorna, his sister, to Lampanus, whom Lampanus marries, although his discredited wife bears him twin children whilst in prison. Eldorna was a harlot even before her marriage to the Duke, and when Pasifer, another false counsellor of the Duke, comes to power, he and Eldorna cuckold Lampanus. On I4 there is an interesting contrast : the Duke, who has been jealous with his virtuous wife, is ironically free from jealousy in the case of the licentious Eldorna. Likewise, Vortiger is impassioned when he sees Castiza kiss Constantius, but suspects nothing of the affair between Roxena and Horsus. Pasifer and Eldorna eventually contrive to get Lampanus removed from his throne and exiled, and Rastophel, a son of Lampanus by Eldorna, takes over the rule. After multitudinous complications Lampanus does come to rule again in Hetruria, only to die without lineage after suffering a terrible metamorphosis. The wronged wife, Egeria, is at the end wedded to Travenna, and peace and a legitimate royal line are restored to the dukedom.

This fantastic Elizabethan romance contains a great deal more by way of digression and horror than I have outlined above, including the rape of Egeria by her son while walking alone in the palace grounds. It seems possible—not perhaps more than a possibility—that the longsuffering Castiza, who is not even a name in the Chronicles, has a literary forebear in Egeria, whose career touches Castiza's at several points.

7. The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (Princeton, 1957), p.259.

The subplot, with Simon the tanner and Oliver the fustian weaver, strikes the reader as on the whole topical and based on ordinary English mayoral-election procedures. R.C. Bald (p.xli) even has something to say about that in his excellent edition : he believes the episode of The Cheater and the Clown, put on by the group of visiting players in Queenborough, is remade from an "old rogue play". His evidence, however, is not strong and is also susceptible of other interpretations than the one he gives. C.R. Baskervill[8] is, on the whole, more convincing when he draws a parallel between Hengist and Bartholomew Fair (1614), claiming that the Cheater and the Clown episode owes a good deal to the cutpurse scenes of Bartholomew Fair. In the scene of Simon's discomfiture, says Baskervill, we have "the same general conception as in Bartholomew Fair, one stupid clown's seeking to pit himself against cheaters, only to lose, and a shrewder clown's censuring the first and, with still greater self-confidence and boasting, essaying to guard against the same fate, only to fall a more notable victim." For the incident of the meal-throwing Baskervill refers to Greene's The Second Part of Conny-catching. The rich irony of Oliver's genuine and helpless laughter whilst at the play is indeed genial, worthy of Jonson in its humorous justice. But, as critics have complained, it does perhaps create an excess of comic relief.

R.C. Bald (p.xviii) calls attention to the fact that Alleyn owned a play called Valteger which was performed as new on 4 December 1596, and he goes on to add that "one can, in fact, find certain passages in Middleton's text that can reasonably be held to support the view that he [based his work on an old play]." In addition to this evidence from within the text, there is some external evidence which hints that Bald's contention is right. In Edward Pudsey's manuscript commonplace book[9] (completed by 1612) there are, sandwiched between quotations from two plays[10] of 1601 or 1602 (fol. 86), some unidentified

8. "Some Parallels to Bartholomew Fair," MP, VI (1908), 124-125.
9. Bodleian ms. Eng. Poet. d.3.
10. Heywood's How a man may choose a good wife from a bad (1602) and Blurt Master Constable (1602).

playscraps. Two at least look as if they might have been part of an earlier version of the extant Hengist :

> Strip my purpose stark naked : ... Though wee misse yo^{w} wee shall not misse excuses.

Compare Hengist III.ii.64 and IV.ii.115-117 :

> To strip my wordes as naked as my purpose ...
> 1 Lady : Yo^{r} grace,
> Hearing our Iust excuses will not say soe
> Vort : Well whats yo^{r} Iust excuse, y'are nere without som....

Pudsey seems to have been copying scraps from a play now lost, in vogue about 1601 or 1602. Henslowe bought a play on the Vortiger theme from Alleyn for two pounds at the end of 1601, and that is the last mention of it in the Diary. Hence it is at least probable that Middleton used a further, dramatic, source, which we no longer have access to.

Yet Hengist, King of Kent is a great deal more than the sum total of its Chronicle sources and its comic scenes. It is a drama of two ambitious men and their failure to hold out against emotional forces. Hengist, the heathen, is perhaps not such a pathetic figure as Vortiger, for Hengist's treachery does bid fair to bring him a more or less permanent reward, whereas Vortiger's to his wife is an impulse to submit to decadent desires controlled by others who can gain from it. The women that these men love and die for are quite starkly contrasted, a more direct contrast than Middleton was to make in the other tragedies. Roxena is the destructive minx, so fair that Vortiger is smitten with desire for her on her first appearance in England ; and as a result of being able to dissemble, more dangerous to Vortiger's state and well-being than Hengist or Horsus. In the end, she is more impiously wicked than Lady Macbeth, becoming afraid only in the face of death itself for her murderous activities.

So much is added to the historical material, including all the blank verse (none of which re-

duces Holinshed's prose to pentameters in the manner Shakespeare occasionally does), that one could pursue the development from a few hints of no less than half-a-dozen characters. To do this, however, would be to miss the point of what has happened in this play. The growth of the main characters into various types of human beings, seeking, getting, desiring and failing, far exceeds the extent to which any earlier characters of Middleton had assumed existence separable from a dramatic action. None of the main protagonists exists for plot convenience, and Constantius and Horsus have command of an extraordinary poetry ; these two men are the least concerned with place and power, though in very different ways, and repeatedly counterpoint, with their evocations of eternity or futility, the ambitions of Vortiger, Hengist and Roxena. Constantius reminds Vortiger of the necessary illusion on which mankind rests his felicity :

> Theirs nothing makes man ffeele his miseries,
> But knowledge only [;] reason that is placd
> For mans director, is his chiefe aflicter....
> (I.i.157-159)

In the terrible last scene of retribution, Vortiger will learn the horror of "knowledge", and discover "strange new found ruin" in his reason (V.ii.49). Constantius had also prophetically said, of divine light, that it "May be the fire to burne you" (I.i.72), and had he been a little more crusading as a preacher, he might have attained the status of a John the Baptist, this monk who compares his early manhood to that of a man who has "his years Come to him / In a rough desert" (I.i.133-134), and whose head is presented to Vortiger when every other way of breaking his spirit has failed.

Horsus' sense of man's futile striving is considerably more wry and even mildly cynical, as when he reflects on Vortiger's ambition to enjoy Roxena :

> euery one has his toye
> While he liues here : some men delight in Building,

A tricke of Babell & will nere be left....
(IV.iii.160-162)

Babel, anarchy, destruction ; Horsus is an anarchist in the final analysis, who destroys Roxena's chastity, Castiza's honour, Vortiger's rationality, and lastly himself. He is perhaps like Allwit, save that he has political power and that the thought of Roxena's relationship with Vortiger shakes him emotionally with more violence than Sir Walter's with Mistress Allwit shakes Allwit.

In view of the likeness of Hengist to Macbeth it would be pleasant to believe that the play was prepared for the King's men ; yet R.C. Bald (pp.xx-xxi and xxviii), because of the appearance of the names of three actors in the manuscripts not known to have been King's men, puts forward the view that the play only later came to belong to them. The company that first acted the play may well have been the Lady Elizabeth's men, and if Middleton did use the old play of Valteger it suggests that either he had a hand in the original Admiral's play, or that relations with the organization were still amicable enough for him to make use of a play no longer on the boards. If the old play did remain with the original troupe, now the Palsgrave's or King of Bohemia's company, it must have been burnt in 1621 when the Fortune, with apparel and playbooks, went up in flames. On 20 March 1617/18 a new licence was granted to the Lady Elizabeth's company, but, says Bentley,[11] "in spite of the statement of the licence that the company might perform in London, they can be traced only in the provinces for the next four years." Some company, perhaps the King's men, possibly put Hengist on before the Court, if the Revels Office scrap means that the plays mentioned were under consideration for such an honour. In the end Shakespeare's old company did acquire and perform this play, which a modern critic can see as peculiarly fitted for the kind of acting the company must have learnt from interpreting Shakespeare's great tragedies. Not only that, but it became a popular play and Simon a figure of a celebrity sufficient

11. The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, I, 181.

to collect sayings around him which he never uttered in the text.

SOURCES

Main plot : Raphael Holinshed, Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Ireland (1577) ; Robert Fabyan, The Chronicle of Fabyan (1516) ; ? Valteger, a lost play ; ? hints from W.C., The Aduentures of Ladie Egeria (ca. 1585).

Subplot : Ben Jonson, Bartholomew Fair (1614).

As Hengist is essentially a tragedy of ambition, so Women Beware Women, after a shift of locale to the civilised era of Renaissance princes, is an examination of the use of power and wealth. Ambition still figures a good deal in Women Beware Women, but the society in which it operates is so much more stable than the early British one that it works itself out through corruption. Indeed, the Florentine society is stagnant ; we find no artisans or aspirants for civic power as in Hengist, and we hear only contemptuous allusions to trade and nothing of conquest. Women Beware Women is only by special license a tragedy, since its mode is consistently comic and didactic. So many critics have called Middleton to book for having mismanaged the ending—"a careful and serious play which fools five actors to the top of the bent and then dashes them by reverting to the ancient Tragedy of Blood," says W. Bridges-Adams[11]—that an investigation of the sources is of crucial importance in helping to decide whether the tragic masque-finale is comic as I believe it is, or whether it is just botched Spanish-Tragedy-cum-Hamlet. For the rest of the play, although there is some dissent, there is more or less general agreement that it represents a totally new direction in English drama, a lead so brilliant that only the slightest comprehension was made of it for two centuries to come.

12. The Irresistible Theatre (London, 1957), I, 269.

For Middleton is beginning to garner in the harvest of his extensive abilities as a playwright, and to apply with skill the techniques learned over twenty years. The blending of the plot materials alone is the result of great care and ingenuity, and in general the stagecraft is imaginative and effective ; having been involved in a production of the play, I feel safe in making these judgments. Perhaps, however, the most surprising feature of the play is its naturalness and conversational speech, a speech which totally disguises the considerable reading that has gone into the play. Italian history, a French novella, some knowledge of the tradition of the allegorical use of chess (which Fletcher drew on about the same time, 1622, for III.iv. of The Spanish Curate[13]), some knowledge of the pastoral and of mythology (neither of which Middleton uses much in his writing, though here they are employed with great sophistication), and Biblical allusion : all go to create the texture of this exceptional play. In addition, there is the use of Shakespearean-style imagery, which seems organic to the dramatic situations, in the constant talk of storms, foul weather, calm and shelter.

The date, which bears a good deal on the sources, is extremely problematic, the limits being 1613-1627, according to the claims of the most recent scholars.[14] G.E. Bentley,[15] at the end of his discussion, remarks that no-one (in print) has looked into the question of the sources available for the story of Hippolito and

13. See Margery Fisher's edition of Women Beware Women, unpublished University of Oxford dissertation (1937), pp.102-105 of the "Introduction and Notes."
14. Jackson I. Cope, "The Date of Middleton's Women Beware Women," MLN, LXXVI (1961), 295-300, has produced evidence to push back the date to 1613, and G.E. Bentley, in The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 905-907, shows that a date very close to the end of Middleton's life is tenable.
15. The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 907.

Isabella, which seem to be three in number until it is realised that one of these is a ghost.[16] The two definite dates for the sourcebook and its English translation are 1610 and 1628. Until this investigation is made, "?1621" must remain on several grounds the best working date.[17]

Baldwin Maxwell,[18] without knowing that Malespini was Middleton's chief source of knowledge for Bianca Capello (1548-1587) and her career, said that "the fullness of Middleton's acquaintance with the story and the minuteness of some of his details suggest ... that when he departed from the known facts, he did so with deliberate intent." This is a revealing comment, and helpful in appreciating the art of this play. Maxwell gives the real age of Francesco, Duke of Florence, (1541-1587) at his meeting with Bianca as twenty-two, whereas Middleton makes him fifty-five. Any romance, then, which there was in the original events, any generosity, vanishes under the analysis of lust and ambition Middleton wants to make. There can be no compromise with and no blurring of the evil of the adultery.

The account of Bianca Capello and Francesco de' Medici, who became Grand Duke of Florence in 1574 (although he had been at the head of his father's government for some years before his father, Cosimo, died), which we can piece together from Malespini and Fynes Morison is not necessarily Middleton's source of information; Middleton was City Chronologer from 6 September 1620 onwards, and might well have taken an interest in foreign accounts supplied by those in touch with Italian affairs. Yet these are the materials scholars have worked with, and for a reader of *novelle* like Middleton, the use of

16. Samuel Schoenbaum perpetrated the error of a 1620 version of Meslier on p.112 of his *Middleton's Tragedies*; but see p.257 of the same book.
17. See also my note to *The Triumphs of Truth* in Chapter Eight, which bears on the date.
18. "The Date of Middleton's *Women Beware Women*," *PQ*, XXII (1943), 339.

Malespini seems especially probable. Karl Christ, in his Quellenstudien, was the first to trace the use of the Bianca story, and in many ways his is the best account. Nevertheless, I shall also draw on Samuel Schoenbaum's chapter in his Middleton's Tragedies, and on Margery Fisher's section in her edition of Women Beware Women. Celio Malespini has two consecutive novelle, 84 and 85, of Part II of his Ducento Novelle Del Signor Celio Malespini (Venice, 1609) devoted to Bianca, Pietro Buonaventura and Francesco de' Medici. He also has another, novella 24 of Part II, devoted to "an elaborate scientific joke played on Francesco and his court by Bianca at Poggio á Cajano," which deceived Margery Fisher into thinking this was all there was in the volume concerning Middleton's heroine. For her thesis, this is nothing short of calamitous, but from the point of view of scholarship's gains, she was therefore encouraged to look further afield.

Middleton's play begins when Bianca and her husband, Leantio, have just arrived in Florence :

> O fair-ey'd Florence,
> Didst thou but know what a most matchless jewel
> Thou now art mistress of ... !
> (I.i.161-163)

says Leantio. Before this event much has happened, the account of which occupied the first page-and-a-half of Malespini's 84th novella. Pietro Buonaventura, a Florentine, was working in Venice for the Bank of the Salviati as a cashier. Opposite lived Bianca Capello, in the wealthy Capello household, and in time Pietro fell in love with her. She believed he was someone important in the Bank's management, and so began to reciprocate his affection. With a marriage offer from Pietro, Bianca, who had looked on him from the first "with a sympathetic and lascivious eye", soon became his mistress. Only a trustworthy matron, a servant of the Capello household, was let into the secret. The means of the illicit lovemaking consisted in Bianca's

visiting Pietro in his rooms, having left open a door of the Capello mansion whereby she could slip back in at first light. One morning she was unable to re-enter ; the baker, meaning well, had closed the door, and the matron could not be roused. Pietro decided on flight to Florence, and with Bianca dressed in serge, they took a boat out of Venice.

Now although we hear nothing of these events in Women Beware Women, merely of the "theft" (I. i.37) of Bianca and of Leantio's marriage to the girl before any intimacy took place, two points are worth noticing as they probably impressed Middleton : firstly Bianca's sensuality, even as a virgin, and the desire she has for cash and status, a desire which governs her sensuality ; and secondly Pietro's weakness, for if the baker had not closed the door, he would have gone on as before enjoying Bianca, letting her think he was a man of some consequence, but content to do without children for convenience's sake. Pietro, in any case, had simply not looked ahead. These two facets of character govern the conduct of Leantio and Bianca in Middleton's play.

At the Buonaventura house everything was starkly changed, for Pietro's father was going through a financially low period. The maidservant had to be dismissed on the arrival of the two extra mouths to feed, and Bianca had to step in and help because the mother was old and feeble. Moreover, Bianca was constrained to keep indoors on account of the threat of what would happen if the two fugitives were caught. Karl Christ[19] points out that the wretched life of Bianca in the Buonaventura household is unhistorical, so that Malespini either invented it or was misinformed. Middleton further changes history by suppressing the elder Buonaventura, no doubt because he would be a hindrance to the gulling of Leantio's mother.

Middleton starts out with the unusual plan of beginning a play with a marriage rather than ending with one. I.i. is largely devoted to dialogue since Middleton does not take us beyond

19. Quellenstudien, p.52, n.3.

visiting Pietro in his rooms, having left open a door of the Capello mansion whereby she could slip back in at first light. One morning she was unable to re-enter ; the baker, meaning well, had closed the door, and the matron could not be roused. Pietro decided on flight to Florence, and with Bianca dressed in serge, they took a boat out of Venice.

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the arrival of the couple and the establishment of the poverty Bianca must accustom herself to. But she is not discouraged, either in Malespini or in Women Beware Women :

> Kind mother, there is nothing can be wanting
> To her that does enjoy all her desires
> (I.i.126-127)

she assures Leantio's mother. But much of the dialogue belongs to Leantio, dialogue which reveals a querulous and self-absorbed way of almost talking to himself.[20] Middleton roots the weakness of Pietro in Malespini very firmly in the utterance he gives Leantio. II.ii. is given over to setting in motion the subplot, and we return to the Malespini narrative again in I.iii. Leantio is about to leave on business : a notable development of the source material, since in fleeing from Venice Pietro had of course lost his employment. Malespini merely moves straight on to the business of the Grand Duke's first glimpse of Bianca without reference to Pietro's whereabouts, but Middleton has to remove Leantio because, in keeping with his characterisation of Leantio's commercial outlook, it would have been impossible for him to be at home and permit Bianca to be seen by the Duke. In Malespini, "the eyes of the one and the other meet", and Bianca immediately pulls down the shade in alarm. The harm done is a matter of much more uncertainty in Women Beware Women, and in fact the Mother dismisses the sinister possibility of the Duke's having seen Bianca most complacently (I.iii.109-114). Again Middleton is working back from indications later supplied by Malespini, since Signora Buonaventura is not present, let alone delineated yet.

In II.ii., Middleton gives us the other side of the picture resulting from the glance

20. Or, as T.B. Tomlinson puts it, "He is one of the people in Middleton who, for all their careful 'factorship', simply cannot stop talking" (A Study of Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy [Cambridge, 1964], p.167).

the Duke directed towards the poor house near St. Mark's Temple. Livia and Guardiano are talking over the Duke's desire to see the girl again, and their motive for helping the Duke is profit :

> 'Twould prove but too much worth in wealth and favour
> To those should work his peace.
> (II.ii.24-25)

Now Francesco had a tutor, a Spaniard named Mondragone, who had belonged first in the service of Cosimo, Francesco's father, and it is to this man that he goes for help. Mondragone in turn applies to his wife, because she is friendly with Pietro's mother, who unsuspectingly retails the whole story (f.276^{v}). Gradually various objections are overcome : Bianca, it seems, lacks clothes good enough to venture out in, but Mondragone's wife can supply these ; Pietro would not allow it, and in any case Bianca is happy with her lot ; but Mondragone's wife insists she can send her coach and safely entertain the two Signore Buonaventura. The old woman, having promised to do the best she can, mentions to Bianca Mondragone's status as Francesco's favourite and the fact that there might well be a safe-conduct to be gained out of their visit. Signora Buonaventura is clearly the good-hearted soul who in her desire to get on well with people loses sight of her dignity, and who is impressed by wealthier people to such an extent that she will recommend their cause as if it were her own. She does not see that the rich seldom hobnob with the poor without some interested motive. Bianca beautifully anatomises this excessive readiness to comply in a later speech :

> Why, here's an old wench would trot into a bawd now
> For some dry sucket, or a colt in march-pane.
> (III.i.269-270)

Middleton has other means at his disposal for demonstrating the cynicism and deviousness of Livia and Guardiano, for in the middle of II.ii. he brings in the foolish old man Fabricio, at

whom the pair covertly mock and jeer. These two are not however married (both having lost their spouses), though they work excellently as a team. Livia has several other functions in the drama, and so she is freed from any matrimonial bond. She subtly gets the information she wants out of the Mother, by setting a chessboard up and delaying her from getting home to Bianca. The old woman is then forced to admit that she has something on her mind. This chess game has considerable significance, I think : "In many romances," says H.J.R. Murray,[21] "... the predilection for chess is represented as one of the things which distinguished the noble from the merchant, and one which the merchant could neither understand nor appreciate—in short, a sign of blue blood."[22] Not that Middleton is overstepping the bounds of probability in making the old woman able to play chess, for Murray says in the same place that a general knowledge of chess can be assumed for England, Spain and Italy in the Middle Ages, although George Owen[23] in 1603 spoke of this accomplishment as usual only "in ancient times" among the plain ploughmen. The old Mother is no match for Livia, and makes many mistakes, even handling the wrong pieces (II.ii.304) in this noblewoman's game.

Bianca is sent for to attend on Livia, but the safe-conduct incentive is not used. Middleton now begins to follow Malespini more closely than at any time, although shifting the whole key of the events towards greater tension and treachery. To begin with, Malespini's Bianca is much less willing to come than Middleton's. Mondragone himself is an experienced dissembler, and promises Bianca politely that the Duke will almost certainly help her. Then his wife takes her by the hand and leads her off to see the palace ; she reckons Pietro's mother is too infirm on her feet to make the tour.

21. A History of Chess (Oxford, 1962), pp.439-440.
22. Murray also states that the game was cordially disliked by the Puritans.
23. Cited from Murray, p.441.

Finally Bianca is let into a most beautiful little room, in which there is the finest of beds, and whose windows look out onto a delightful garden. La Mondragona then makes an excuse about finding keys to show Bianca some clothes, and leaves the stage clear for the Duke. The apprehensive girl can only fall on her knees before him and plead she has lost everything save her honour. The Duke raises her, and tells her that far from having encountered one who will stain her honour, she has found a protector. Without harming her, the Duke leaves behind a shaken and ashen Bianca ; much to the amusement of La Mandragona, who presently comes back and explains that making people jump, notably girls, is the Duke's favourite joke. Malespini writes at this point as if he intended to wind up the whole tale of Bianca in Novella 84, for in the space of a few lines he relates how the Duke and Bianca became lovers, and in the end husband and wife. All this jumps several moves ahead of events in Novella 85, and rather summarily leaves Pietro's reactions, Pietro's mother and Mondragone in the air.

In II.ii.247ff., Middleton utilises this material with the utmost brilliance. Livia keeps the old woman occupied at the chess[24] and sends Guardiano on the tour with Bianca. This handing of the young wife from stranger to stranger is decidedly more sinister, and in any case Middleton's Livia has in this way sold her soul sufficiently when the final retribution comes. Guardiano's damnable craft extends to showing Bianca "naked pictures by the way" (II.ii.408). The climax of the visit to the palace's rooms is to be the monument, a phallic joke typical of Middleton at his sharpest. When Bianca emerges from her seduction, she affirms that she has certainly seen the "monument and all" (II.ii.456). Leantio unwittingly uses the image again in his last speech to Bianca, when he says it is as

24. A chess game which is perfectly playable ; I know at least one reconstructed game which will fit the data Middleton gives.

stupid to try to enlighten her as to lead blind folks to see the monuments, for not the slightest good can come of such folly (IV.i.97-98). The chess game, as is frequently noted, comments on the action going on upstairs ; Livia is symbolically playing with the black pieces. The black duke (or rook) must be Francesco, the white pawn Leantio ; the black king may stand for something more abstract, Satan or Evil perhaps, and the white king Simplicity or Innocence. Guardiano "discovers" the Duke, and vanishes. Francesco is a much more sophisticated and single-minded character in Middleton's hands, but then his goal is immediate seduction and he cannot promise that Bianca will leave with honour unstained. Wealth and honour are what the Duke is offering, except that it is a species of "honour" newly-defined in the corrupt terms of the court.

Middleton gives us both the events and the effects, unlike Malespini. Leantio's mother will remain in the action for a little while yet, to drop out when she has proved to be morally compromised by the Court banquet ; Guardiano's interests will be ironically betrayed by the same woman whom he assisted in the betrayal of Bianca, and Leantio's bitter resentment will be the seed of the destruction which spreads to choke them all. Middleton even gives us Bianca coming downstairs after her forced submission, including a reaction which is very complex indeed. Shock, rationalisation, bitterness, and fear are all mingled together in her long speech (II.ii.425-449). Bianca, in her confusion, is close to inner moral inversion, twisting the Christian sentence : "to love the sinner and hate the sin"[25] into "lik[ing] the treason well, but hat[ing] the traitor." Middleton can have none of the polite agreement, the laissez-faire, which Malespini's couple come to, but accepts a more Calvinistic view in his passionate conviction that adultery and infidelity bring about moral disorder and destroy society.

25. I.e. a Christian proverb : see The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs (Oxford, 1948) p.282.

After the brilliance of II.ii., Middleton begins to show this disorder at work in his very next scene. The focus is on Leantio this time, who is due home from his out-of-town business. When we begin to follow Novella 85 of Malespini, we find Leantio's counterpart, Pietro, has indeed moved into the spotlight. The Duke has made him Keeper of the Wardrobe, and given to him a fine palace in the Via Maggior for himself and Bianca. At night the Duke is accustomed to sleep with Bianca in Pietro's house, and like Pietro in earlier days, go home before first light. But Bianca had by no means lost her love for Pietro, especially since he was a young and handsome fellow.

This arrangement suggests to the modern mind that Pietro was a base, unprincipled character, who in some way lacked a normal sense of possessiveness. It soon appeared to all Florence that he was a selfish and self-esteeming libertine, which the small authority he had been given swelled beyond bounds. Among his many mistresses, he became especially infatuated with the beautiful widow Cassandra Buongiani of the di Ricci family. When his suit to her was successful, he simply ignored the urgent need for discretion, a need rendered all the more urgent because of the touchy concept of family honour ; for Cassandra's family was a noble one, and her brothers were prepared to kill to preserve that nobility's honour. Schoenbaum nowhere makes the point that if anyone in Malespini's two novels can be looked upon with some sympathy, it is Pietro cocking a snook at the pompous di Ricci family's enormous pride in their honour. He does it to their faces, with temerity, recklessly, and makes no secret of the fact that he is lying regularly with Cassandra. Schoenbaum makes Malespini's Pietro sound like an ungrateful boor, but really he is the most original of the lot. The Duke may be discreet, but that certainly does not make up for the fact that his liaison with Bianca is adultery (doubly so, since he was married to Johanna of Austria until 1578).

Alexander Dyce[26] made the comment that "the earlier events in [Bianca's] history, and in that of Bianca of the tragedy, have a sort of resemblance," and when we compare Middleton's management of Leantio and Bianca, and the widow Livia, in the central scenes III.i. and III.ii., "a sort of resemblance" is the correct expression of their relation to Malespini. Since La Mondragona in Malespini has been discarded, Middleton must find a new rôle for Livia ; he solves it brilliantly by giving her the part Cassandra Buongiani has in Novella 85. Leantio comes home to find his wife disaffectionate, critical, and jeering towards his old Mother :

> Troth, you speak wondrous well for your old house
> here ;
> 'Twill shortly fall down at your feet to thank you,
> Or stoop, when you go to bed, like a good child,
> To ask you blessing.
> (III.i.42-45)

She will not even kiss her husband, and she says she cannot understand Leantio's wish to remain with one woman. The practise of kissing she calls sentimental ; a fortnight's dalliance is sufficient for anyone. Middleton cannot separate the change in Bianca's experience from its effect upon Leantio and her marriage. Contrary to the changes hinted at in Malespini, it is Bianca who becomes arrogant and Leantio who suffers.

Middleton's method of sealing the intimacy between Bianca and the Duke into habituation is to have her invited to a banquet at Livia's house. Leantio tries to prevent his wife from attending, but contemptuously she pushes him aside. The Duke, however, wants Leantio also present, in order to reward him and settle his objections, if any exist. The reward is the captainship of Rovans citadel,

> a place of credit,
> I must confess, but poor ; my factorship
> Shall not exchange means with't : he that died

26. Quoted from Bullen, VI, 236.

last in't,
He was no drunkard, yet he died a beggar.
(III.ii.343-346)

Pietro was given the Keeper of the Wardrobe's place, a worthy "bit to stay the stomach," but Middleton's Duke has merely given Leantio this unknown fortress (it might be Rovezzano, three miles east of Florence).[26] Leantio has no cause for satisfaction—yet ; for he has to endure the spectacle of his wife being kissed by the Duke and finally whisked away at the end of the banquet to the ducal palace. Then Livia, in her new role as Malespini's Cassandra, ironically realizes who he is and seduces him with the promise of "worldly treasure". It is this compromise, more than any other, which prevents Leantio from being the moral hero of Women Beware Women. The darkness of the play is complete at this point, and the relationships almost static. Middleton obviously needed to look for a fresh character to force the tragic peripateia, and in the figure of Ferdinand, the Cardinal who condemns the status quo insofar as it concerns Bianca and Francesco, he finds him.

Middleton doubles the need for the removal of Leantio by both following Malespini and introducing the Lord Ferdinand from contemporary accounts. Pietro earns his demise in Malespini by baiting the di Riccis once too often. The man who most objects is the young Roberto di Ricci who tries to get Cassandra to control Pietro's impudent outbursts. The Duke's protection of Bianca is, however, the main obstacle to repressing Pietro by force. Malespini has much space to devote to this problem of discretion, but as it mainly consists of admonitions and replies of one sort or another, it is rather undramatic. There follow two final dramatic scenes : one in which Pietro so upsets Bianca that she becomes overwrought, and another in which Roberto di Ricci and his

27. So Margery Fisher, p.81. It would be interesting to find the account, or map even, that gave this detail to Middleton.

young gentleman thugs ambush and murder Pietro. Middleton adapts both of these. Pietro is in his most malicious mood when he insults Bianca, calling her "an old cow of a whore." After, in addition, making mock of di Ricci outside Holy Trinity church at pistol-point, the end is near for Pietro.

Pietro had spent the night with the lovely widow, and was going home at first light through the empty streets. In an alley which was a mere stone's throw from the door of his apartment, di Ricci and his friends, twelve in all, attacked him. He defended himself with sword and pistol, but apart from wounding di Ricci in the head with his sword, could not reply to the violence which "splattered his brains on the wall." Bianca was reduced to a state of hysterical distraction by the news, and felt suicidal. She was quieted by the Duke, and in 1578, six years after this incident, he married her. But the delay was occasioned only by the presence of Johanna, Francesco's wife, until her death in 1578. Cassandra died the night after Pietro, murdered by two men. With this last piece of information drily rendered, Malespini closes his second novella. He has nothing to say at all about Ferdinand de' Medici (1549-1609), who became Duke in 1587.

In IV.i. Bianca comes onstage fully established in her court quarters, with an entourage of ladies. When she is alone, Leantio enters to her, not from home, but from his mistress widow, Livia. He has come to show off to her, and to insult her. Pietro, however, would have been ashamed of Leantio's adolescent need to prove his intimacy with Livia before the much more self-restrained Bianca. Not that Middleton's Bianca cares very much what happens to her former partner ; but when he threatens her, as Pietro threatens his wife with cutting her throat at one point, she is just a little out of her depth. As soon as the Duke hears of Leantio's visit, he is ready to set on one of Livia's kinsmen to murder him. Middleton's Bianca knows about this, unlike Malespini's Bianca, and is prepared for it to take place. She is the most studied, most credible example of the portraits of sex-

ually experienced women who control their men, and she sees her husband put away with no more qualms than are aroused by her female nature. Livia is one of Middleton's older women, a widow, who, like Mistress Newcut of Your Five Gallants, is willing to pay for her pleasure. Hippolito, Livia's brother, is sent for and when he leaves after hearing of his sister's affair, the Italian concept of honour has persuaded him of the necessity of removing Leantio. For Leantio is too base for the court ; there is an element of blind snobbery about Hippolito which is not present in Roberto di Ricci, who killed for a better reason.

In the same scene Ferdinand enters with lights, with "serious business / Fix'd in his look" (IV.i.182-183). To my mind this interview between the brothers should take place before Francesco comes in to discover that Leantio has been braving Bianca. This Cardinal is very much Middleton's own creation, owing nothing to the Ferdinand of history, who was "sayde to be of good and sounde Judgment, affable, and mercifully disposed, and in matters of loue to desyre the first gathering of the Rose, but neuer after to care for the tree."[28] The whole scene, ll. 186-267, is built around two Biblical scriptures, namely :

> at the rebuke of fiue, shall ye flee, till ye be left as a beacon vpon the top of a mountaine, and as an ensigne on a hill.
> (Isaiah XXX, 17)

(The context of this scripture is most interesting, since it deals with putting trust in false ideals and in being exposed in an eminent, not to say lonely, position.) The second scripture is :

> Yee are the light of the world. A citie that is set on an hill, cannot be hid.
> (S. Matthew V, 14-16)

The lights are set down low, and the Cardinal

28. Shakespeare's Europe[,] Unpublished Chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary, ed. Charles Hughes (London, 1903), p.96.

goes on to speak about Francesco's moral responsibility :

> Every sin thou committ'st shows like a flame
> Upon a mountain, 'tis seen far about.
> (IV.i.209-210)

Without going into detail—there are five more lines of this particular simile—it is enough to say that after the Cardinal's symbolic light-bearing, all the lives of the characters are brought out into the light. For in IV.ii. the sun is up and Hippolito waiting for his victim. Without much ado he challenges Leantio and slays him. From this point on the credit for the working-out of the deaths and their causes is Middleton's. He stays reasonably close to history in the destruction of Francesco and Bianca, but Livia dies in a manner very unlike that of Cassandra. She is poisoned by Isabella, a woman she has deceived.

What Middleton's authorities were for the entertainment on the wedding-night and for the rumour of the mistaken poisoning at Poggio á Cajano no-one can be sure. In 1578 Francesco and Bianca were married, and in 1587 they died on the 19th and 20th October respectively. Karl Christ reports that on 12 October 1579 Ferdinand spoke strongly against his brother ; and these three events are re-arranged so that the Cardinal's attack comes first, then the marriage celebration (a pastoral "device"), and finally the poisonings. In IV.iii. the Cardinal stops the wedding procession to denounce the form Francesco's repentance has taken ; the historical Cardinal Ferdinand was much more concerned to see to it that Bianca did not try to pass off Antonio, an illegitimate son by Francesco, as successor to the throne of Florence. Middleton's Cardinal is a disinterested Christian preacher, a man of great gravity and insight, who does not believe that marrying one's whore is necessarily an improvement. In V.i. Guardiano is seen preparing for the marriage entertainments ; at 1.90 this pastoral, complete with dilemma after the manner of Sidney and Fletcher, begins. Bianca and Francesco had been entertained on their wedding

night in 1579 by a symbolical tournament involving Persian knights, which was lavishly produced ; later Cosimo Gaci published an account under the title Poetica Descritione d'intorno all'inventioni della Sbarra Combattuta in Fiorenza nel cortile del Palagio de' Pitti in honore della Sereniss. Signora BIANCA CAPELLO Gran Dvchessa di Toscana (Florence, 1579). Middleton's pastoral masque is gloriously comic ; even the verse is rhymed to secure ridiculous effects :

> Take heed of stumbling more, look to your way ;
> Remember still the Via Lactea.
> (V.i.99-100)

says Ganymede to Hebe. Probably coincidentally, there is a passage in Gaci about the knights being fine enough to go via "la via lattea" to the celestial gods (A4). The signal for the farcical, anti-heroic endings of all but the two principals comes when Guardiano stamps on a trapdoor and disappears, with a shocked exclamation, from view. Middleton turns to history once again for the attempted poisoning of the Cardinal, to whom Bianca was said to have offered a poisoned tart which her husband ate in mistake, whereupon she ate of the tart herself. Schoenbaum[29] cites the relevant rumour, and so does Margery Fisher.[30]

Welded very firmly to this action is the story of Isabella and Hippolito,[31] a simple subplot telling of the betrayal of a virgin about to be married, by a woman who was excited by the idea of illicit sex. The man to whom she is betrayed is her uncle, which made the sin

29. Middleton's Tragedies, p.112 (from Fynes Moryson).
30. "Introduction and Notes" to Women Beware Women, p.15.
31. First recognised by Gerard Langbaine, An Account of the English Dramatick Poets (1691), p.374.

in Renaissance church law incest.[32] Middleton took the story from some version of the narrative which I have read, The True History of the Tragicke loves of Hipolito and Isabella Neapolitans (1633), the second edition of a translation which first appeared in 1628. Difficulties in obtaining the editions of 1610 in French and of 1628, and even in knowing whether they are the same substantially, have obliged me to use this late text. The 1628 translation was entered on the Stationers' Register four months too late for Middleton to have known anything about it.

Franklin P. Rolfe,[33] reviewing Ralph C. Williams' Bibliography of the Seventeenth-Century Novel in France (New York, 1931), corrected Williams thus :

> Hart, Alexander : The True History of the Tragicke loves of Hipolito and Isabella Neapolitans. Englished. London, 1628. Translation of : Les amours tragiques d' Hypolite et Isabelle, Paris, 1610. Ars (8° BL 21157) By Meslier, says Williams, but preface signed S.D. (Esdaile, p.75).

"Ars" stands for the Bibliothèque de l'Arsénal in Paris. On recourse to Williams, the picture is somewhat different :

> MESLIER
> Les Amours tragiques d'Hypolite et Isabelle, P., 12°.
> A BL 13624

This book is listed under 1610. Williams and

32. Though marriage between second cousins even today is considered undesirable, and between first cousins unthinkable, the prejudice is breaking down. But see C.L. Powell, English Domestic Relations 1487-1653 (New York, 1917), p.73, Item II.4.a.
33. "On the Bibliography of Seventeenth-Century Prose Fiction," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 1079.

Rolfe had obviously seen different books, or one of them made a mistake. If this whole business could be investigated it might well yield the answer as to which version Middleton saw. And to cap the mystery, Alexander Hart was perhaps not the translator of the French tale.[34]

Middleton made short work of this long-winded tale, and he also made some very interesting changes. Fabritio, a gentleman of Naples, married a second wife, a well-born gentlewoman named Livia. Both had children already, and Livia's eldest, Pompeio, seemed a wealthy and fitting young husband for Isabella, Fabritio's girl. Livia, however, kept Pompeio away, as he had many imperfections and many ill habits of mind and body ; whereas Isabella was a sweet girl of seventeen, with an excellent voice and many talents. Still, even after Isabella had got to know Pompeio, and taken a dislike to him, the marriage was to go through. For Isabella the real trouble arose after she met her uncle Hipolito, an accomplished young man of twenty-one or twenty-two home from Bologna ; he was a complete contrast to Pompeio, and gradually took more and more of her time. When it became clear to Hipolito that it was more than a case of affection growing out of close sympathy, he declared his love for Isabella. Like the proper, and somewhat mealy-mouthed, young girl she was, Isabella rebutted his advances. But Hipolito had a sister, a nun, to whom he confided all of this one day, and she at once encouraged him to renew the pursuit. This interfering nun, aged about thirty-five, is almost Iago-like in her interest in persuading the couple to accept what will harm them— almost but not quite, since she tells Hipolito she is one "who you know have not onely loved you above my other Brothers, but even before my selfe" (p.28). She points out that marriage is not the only way for love to thrive ; often a good discreet affair is as satisfactory as anything. When Isabella and Hipolito are out at the

34. STC 13516, 13517 regard the translation as anonymous, as does Miss Fisher (p.18).

convent one day, the nun narrates how discreet Isabella's mother was when she had an affair with the Marquess of Coria during Isabella's father's absence. No-one found out, and no-one even then knows that Isabella is the Marquess's child by Isabella's mother. In this fabricated story of reckless adultery, and in the naive sufferance of the adultery by the father, we have perhaps the clue to Middleton's interest in the story. Although Isabella affects to think the story a cunning imposture to work her to her uncle's desires, it is sufficient to start an affair which makes mock of the marriage to Pompeio. For discretion's sake, Hipolito leaves to further his education in Padua.

This narrative, occupying pp.1-73 of the 1633 edition, is cut down to I.ii., II.i. and 11.1-138 of II.ii. In I.ii. Guardiano, who is the Ward's guardian, is talking marriage terms with Fabricio, Isabella's father. He is a widower, and the name of his wife in the source, Livia, has been given to the bawd of the main action. Fabricio is characterised as a bluff, dogmatic father, the "heavy father" type who is blind to his own absurdity. Hippolito and Isabella have already met before Isabella is introduced to the Ward. The Ward is normally controlled by a servant called Sordido, one of Middleton's comic fools who try to ape their betters, a cruder Simon. Isabella is understandably shocked by the fate which marriage to the Ward means, but even so she is not ready to hear Hippolito's protestations of love. In II.i. Livia employs her powers for her brother :

> you've few sisters
> That love their brothers' ease 'bove their own honesties
> (II.i.70-71)

and having dismissed Hippolito, tells the Marquess of Coria story to Isabella. Livia, however, is far craftier than the nun, because she concentrates on the dreadful marriage to the Ward, and suggests that she can give a reason why Isabella need not obey her father. Isabella is

first bound by oath not to tell anyone the story of her mother's affair, and when she parts, believes she is applying the knowledge to her situation with Hippolito for the first time. Middleton's handling here of course removes a large burden from Hippolito, who cannot imagine why Isabella is willing on a sudden to make love to him (II.i.228-231). Yet he undoubtedly knows that it is incest from his point of view and Isabella's, although he is not a party to the lie which causes Isabella to commit what she knows to be adultery, but not incest. The marriage to the Ward must now follow to keep their "acts hid from sin-piercing eyes." Fabricio can only marvel at his daughter's sudden willingness to obey him in the matter of marriage.

Middleton took the odd metaphor from the source-tale ; here is Isabella after she and Hippolito resume and intensify their friendship :

> so, methinks,
> After a friendly, sharp, and savoury chiding,
> A kiss tastes wondrous well, and full o' the grape.
>
> (II.i.201-203)

Isabella in the source-tale writes thus to Hipolito in Padua :

> Thinke then that the sharpnesse of this absence, which our disaster makes us now feele, is but to relish to vs the better the sweetnesse of each others presence.
>
> (p.78)

But as the gloomy tale unwound, Middleton used less and less of it. Perhaps originally he intended to use more, for Isabella is really a bold and courageous strumpet not unlike Webster's Vittoria Corambona ; her tale could have paralleled Bianca's much more than it does. As it is, "She can only discover her sin is incest after all, can only vow revenge against Livia, and to accomplish it take part in the patterned intrigue of the final act."[35] For the

35. R. H. Barker, Thomas Middleton, p.138.

writer of the source-tale divests his two protagonists of any dignity at all ; they continue their affair in a hole-in-the-corner fashion for another seventy pages of the narrative. Hipolito returns from Padua to consummate the affair, which Isabella later comes to think of as her true marriage, in the nun's cabinet. Not long after, Pompeio and Isabella are married ; Isabella hates every minute of it and calls it a "sacrifice". Hipolito, however, is vacillating and takes too long to engineer the flight with Isabella which it is clear he should have arranged in the first place. The enemy of the couple's clandestine nights together is not Pompeio, who is a pathetically trusting soul, but an uncle who is guardian to Pompeio during his minority. This fox even plants a man in Pompeio's household to watch all the comings and goings. In the end, his vigil is repaid for Isabella's affair is discovered and she is obliged to take some mercury sublimate pills she had put aside as a last extremity. The irony is that she is caught on the point of departure, and poisoned as Hipolito flees to save himself. He later takes revenge on the guardian and Pompeio by slaying them, and he himself dies poisoned by the older woman he later married, who is jealous of his abstract devotion to Isabella. The killing of Pompeio is clearly uncalled-for, and Middleton in fairness lets the idiotic cuckold remain alive at the end ; but the killing of the guardian is just, especially as he had earlier threatened Hipolito with death (p.119).

As I mentioned, Middleton does not devote much more space to the story of the guilty pair once the seduction of Isabella is complete. Part of III.ii. and III.iii. carry the subplot story on independently, and then Hippolito moves into the main story in his capacity of Roberto di Ricci. For truly Middleton's characters are Protean in their roles ; Karl Christ[36] gives a useful chart to show that three of the ten major characters of Women Beware Women are composites from Malespini and The Tragicke loves—

36. Quellenstudien, p.66.

Hippolito, Guardiano, and Livia. Livia is the most complex fusion, for she assimilates the roles of Mondragone's wife, Cassandra Buongiani, and the worldly nun. Yet she is something more than all these too, and when she finds Leantio dead in IV.ii., she breaks down with genuine grief and in anger reveals the incest between Hippolito and Isabella. Middleton allows her to add the detail of Isabella's pregnancy to clinch the fact of earlier intimacy (IV.ii.70). Guardiano vows revenge against Hippolito, and Isabella against Livia ; these four plot and counterplot and finally destroy each other,37 leaving the disastrous mixing of the cups as a separate tragedy for the royal couple. III.ii., the scene of the banquet at Livia's house, is perhaps the most original departure of all in the adaptation of the novella. Isabella is being shown off to her husband-to-be, before the best company of Florence, and she must dance with her fiancé. But Hippolito is asked by the Ward to lead the way first with Isabella ; this seems a very graphic way of indicating that the decorum of a relationsip between Hippolito and Isabella is almost a matter of public recognition. But Middleton almost breaks his own wicket here, in making the Ward so extremely pathetic, and has to write in III.iii, a short scene which is offensively bad bawdry. In it Sordido and the Ward examine Isabella as if she were an animal at a cattle market.

37. How does Livia destroy Isabella ? "take that," says Livia (V.i.157), in Dyce's text. A poisoned ring is perhaps the solution, touched on Isabella's face. But the "burning treasure" reference would make a shower of gold seem more in place. "Iuno," says Abraham Fraunce in The Third part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch (1592), "is the goddesse of riches and honour, which are as glorious in shew, and are as transitorie in truth, as the Peacoks spotted trayne ..." (EIV). In any case the effect would be hilarious, as intended.

Sordido and the Ward are at the bottom of a privileged society insulated by money from business, ethics and economic affairs. Leantio and his mother are out of it. At the top is the Duke, who has more pressure on him than any to be discreet, and more than discreet, moral even. Francesco's failure is largely responsible for the breeding of such parasite intermediaries as Livia and Guardiano. Many critics have seen a very dellberate structure in the layers of sensibility with which the sinners of Women Beware Women are endowed, but few have expressed it well.[38] Robert Ornstein[39] gets onto the right track when he speaks of a "conflict between reckless romantic ardor and the sensible compromises with passion advocated by a society which envies the luxuries and imitates the sophisticated codes of the court." But the "two-play" critics (Women Beware Women and The Changeling) inevitably distort Middleton as the critics who have surveyed the whole field do not. Barker's is a good essay, and T.B. Tomlinson's is also fresh and controversial. In their search for the positive values deducible from Middleton's world, they are much subtler and see that Middleton too was subtler than to obtrude speeches which carry a morally positive ticket. Leantio is especially often misjudged, although a study of the sources reveals how carefully Middleton made him into a "melancholy fellow" (Karl Christ's phrase) who is not without a fumbling heroism.[40] His physical desire for his bride has been made rather too much of, with sad results for the critic's final

38. Irving Ribner, Jacobean Tragedy (London, 1962), pp.137-152, labours the obvious and reads tension into an action which his account suggests is all going the same way. He is much too sympathetic with Middleton, and tries to justify everything as equally significant in Women Beware Women.
39. The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (Madison, 1960), p.192.
40. See Muriel Bradbrook, Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, 1935), p.231.

survey of the characters. If more attention had been paid to the "storm-shelter" imagery, Leantio's real insecurity would have been seen in its proper light :

> But let storms spend their furies ; now we've got
> A shelter o'er our quiet innocent loves,
> We are contented.
>
> (I.i.51-53)

This is surely a very modern theme ; as Tomlinson[41] says, "as an investigation and evaluation of attitudes that were increasingly to dominate modern living, the tautly controlled excitement of Middleton's dialogue, playing on these issues, is an unrivalled achievement." Exciting, too, are the portraits of women such as Livia and Bianca ; both are developed out of a long line of studies in Middleton. Eugenia of The Old Law seems nearest to Bianca, in her capacity of experienced manipulator of men, but we see besides, for the first time, the psychology of the kind of girl who may become like this. And the change is convincingly related to material causes. Livia is the widow, the mother-figure, who provides. She is like Thomasine of Michaelmas Term, in that the young victim arouses desires in her to shelter him. Yet these two women are modified into more naturalistic terms than ever before, and the sexual excitement inherent in the three seductions is played down. The world of the play as a result seems much more normal than that of, say, No Wit No Help Like A Woman's. The transvestites, the wittols and the dominated men seem to have found no place in this latest phase of Middleton's writing, perhaps because the male characters seem to have grown up into their own self-assertiveness at last. They are no longer the victims of a contest between aggressive or seductive women and their own desire to preserve their honour ; and even an older, mature woman can make a truly tragic mistake. The introduction of the Christian moralist, who of course is ex-

41. A Study of Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy, p.171.

empt from destruction by virtue of his stand for truth, makes all the difference to the power of the women. There seems to be less distortion of ordinary life to secure theatrical effects, and the motives of almost every character are at once clear and credible.

SOURCES

Main plot : Celio Malespini, Dvcento Novelle (1609), Pt. II, novelle 84 and 85 ; Report of Florentine affairs covering Fernando I's succession to the dukedom ; ? Chess-game from John Fletcher, The Spanish Curate (1622).

Subplot : One version of The True History of the Tragicke loves of Hipolito and Isabella Neapolitans (1610 [French]; 1628 [English]).

The Changeling forms a brilliant companion-piece for Women Beware Women, and although it has defects of its own, they are not those of the tragedy Middleton wrote single-handed. It is a play simple in technique, concentrating on fewer characters, and is clear to understand both in the reading and the watching. This is partly the result of concentration on one main source tale, so that the blending of personages from different narratives as in Women Beware Women is a less used device. One thing we can say : if Middleton's age had reached the stage of psychological verisimilitude in its novel and story that ours has, this man would have been in constant demand as a notable dramatic adapter for film and television. The points at which the plot jolts in The Changeling are often reflections of serious flaws in the source-tale, The Trivmphs of Gods Revenege, against the crying, and execrable Sinne of Murther (1621), by John Reynolds Book I, History IV, entitled "Alsemero and Beatrice - Ioana."[42] In all fairness to Reynolds,

42. The source was first identified by Gerard Langbaine in An Account of the English Dramatick Poets (1691), p.371.

let it be said at once that he never intended to have his tale adapted for the stage :

> The World, that it may bewitch vs to its will, assayles vs with Wealth, Riches, Dignities ... Dancing, Maskes and Stage-playes, ... with a thousand other inticements and allurements. ("The Preface," A2^{v})

Reynolds' story is set in Alicant, Spain, and may well be a factual history written up. If so, the vagaries of improbable humankind can not be held to Reynolds' account when the action seems implausible. Yet I myself have doubts that the merchant of Exeter was merely reporting. However, Reynolds speaks of "collect[ing]" the histories "from forraine parts" (B2^{v}), and DNB asserts that they are translations from the French. This statement appears to have long been made and it irritated Reynolds, for "later editions contain a 'Readvertisement to the Ivdiciovs Christian Reader', strenuously denying the charge of plagiarism and claiming that all the narratives were discovered and collected by the author during his travels."[43] Yet on p.131 of the Alsemero and Beatrice story we find the word "Parents" used twice in the Latinate sense for "relatives", which seems like a hasty translation of French "parents" or Spanish "parientes."[44] If there was a French or Spanish original for the tale, it is possible Middleton saw it.

The changes made to the source are of the most striking kind, bold and effective. De Flores, for instance, who is a gallant young man in the service of Don Diego de Vermandero in Reynolds, becomes a hard-willed, ugly fellow who has a skin disease which causes people to shudder with revulsion. As an evil destructive force, he ranks only lower than Iago because he has some motive for his deeds, not because he is less indifferent to morality. Middleton obviously felt,

43. The Changeling, ed. N.W. Bawcutt, (London, 1958), p.xxxi.
44. But see OED under "Parent" ; as Reynolds is cited, it makes the whole argument rather circular.

because of political events, that Spain now more than Italy was a land of pride, evil, valour and sudden violence, and was at some pains to set his story in a local colouring. Hence to add more intrigue to the rather obvious action of Reynolds, he cast about for more Spanish material. He found Gerardo the Vnfortvnate Spaniard. Or A Patterne For Lascivious Lovers, by Don Gonçalo de Cespedes and Meneçes, translated by Leonard Digges (1622) ; and within this sensationally-titled book, which Digges claimed contained only "morall Examples ... in ... Tragicall Discourses", a tale told by the mournful Pilgrim (pp.89-107) whose name is Roberto.[45] Middleton added yet another element, that of the virginity test, which is thriftily used as a method of proving Diaphanta's maiden innocence and of showing Alsemero's jealous nature. The introduction of this element (IV.i.17) is undoubtedly jarring, and cannot be put down to Reynolds' account. This idea of a physicians's closet has, I think, an interesting significance in Middleton's plays. It first cropped up in No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's (1611), where Weatherwise the pedant kept a closet. A statement by Mark Eccles[46] about John Gerard makes for plausible speculation that Middleton knew Gerard's magnificent compendium, the Herball (1597). John Gerard, a man who probably knew William Middleton, gave his bond in 1590 to the responsibility of seeing Thomas Middleton's patrimonial portion paid, and in 1605 Dr. Roger Marbeck, the uncle of Middleton's wife, bequeathed a copy of the book to the Middletons. The kind of lore which this old scholar of flora and herbs picked up, mainly perhaps from Continental sources, is instanced by the following : "To

45. The source was first noted by B. Lloyd in "A Minor Source of The Changeling," MLR, XIX (1924), 101-102. Lloyd's discovery superseded G.P. Baker's article, "A new source of The Changeling," in The Journal of Comparative Literature, I, (1903), 87-88, on general analogues for the incident of the fire.
46. "Thomas Middleton a Poett," p.517.

staie the lusting or longing of Women with childe," and "To make one Chaste." Or by drinking Agnus Castus as a decoction, it was possible to procure restraint of bodily lust. Other writers went further : The Book of Prittie Conceites (no author or date, but STC's provisional date is 1586) actually gave a test the ordinary man could employ if he felt uncertainty about his bride-to-be's honour and honesty :

> To proue if a Maiden be cleane [:]
> Burne Motherwort, and let her take the smoake at her nose, and if she be corrupt she shall pisse, or else not. Otherwise take greie Nettles while they be greene, and let her pisse on them, if she be no maiden they will wither forthwith, or else not.[47]

N.W. Bawcutt in his excellent edition[48] cites other examples which indicate that most of these tests came from ealier Continental writers and ultimately from Pliny. Yet he nowhere makes the point that if Beatrice had had no way of testing Diaphanta, who is markedly sensual, she could scarcely have relied on her. De Flores' second murder springs directly out of Beatrice's discovery of Alsemero's jealous thoughts.

William Archer[49]—after whose broadsides The Duchess of Malfi can never sail flying such a resplendent reputation again—wanted to rewrite the plot of The Changeling. He complains that Beatrice should have perceived what a brutal ruffian like De Flores would want as a reward ; once in trouble, she should have denied all complicity in Alonzo's murder, or told Alsemero to deal with De Flores, or even managed De Flores' demands better. But Archer is not without a kindly word for Middleton, who, he felt, "was a real dramatist, who, in another environ-

47. Quotation supplied by Mr. R.F. Hill, of King's College London, which I have been unable to check.
48. See his note on IV.i.25.
49. The Old Drama and the New (London, 1923) pp.97-100.

were seeking to enjoy, they thrash each other with whips and thus in their mutual abuse become aware of their absurdity. Antonio, one of the amorous gallants in The Changeling's subplot, seems to have been responsible for the play's early popularity, especially when he was acted by a first-rate comedian. But with his present amount of speech in the text, he seems no more significant than Lollio or Franciscus. In IV.iii. it is Franciscus rather than Antonio who is specifically instructed to "bang but his fool's coat well-favouredly," so that we may imagine a scene in which the venturesome fool was attacked by the aggressive madman.

It is in III.iii. that Rowley makes his best, satirical points against the main plot. As Franciscus moves dangerously towards Isabella, Lollio shows him the whip. The point surely is that love—which is said to be the cause of Francisco's going mad—is a form of lunacy and needs strict control. If only there were someone strong enough to show the moral whip to the people in the main plot, then some cure might be hoped for. Rowley makes other good points, and now and again has some sharp satirical thrusts, but it is not really to the purpose to defend the subplot here or to discuss the value of Rowley's collaboration. The first and last scenes of the main plot are a different matter indeed, however.

Before going back to look at the use Middleton made of Reynolds and Digges, it is in place to survey other source-material which has been offered from time to time. Middleton himself suggested that he had used one of Antonius Mizaldus' experiments for the virginity test (IV. i.), but he was certainly not referring to his book de Arcanis Naturae Libelli Quatuor, according to Dyce and Bawcutt. However, he certainly must have known that Mizaldus did go in for such matters in other works. Karl Christ,[53] as always, had something to add. He suggests that Lope de Vega's Los Locos de Valencia (published 1620) had some influence on the subplot. In that play,

53. Quellenstudien, p.98.

Floriano feigns madness in Gerardo's asylum, and the incident in scenes vi. and vii. of act one of Los locos (Vol. XII, p.417 of the Real Academia Espanola edition [Madrid, 1930]), where Fedra, daughter of the Administrator, has watched him out of the hospital in order to meet her lover, bears something of a resemblance. to Rowley's subplot. R.R. Reed's[54] theory, which treats The Changeling's subplot as a satire on Bethlehem Hospital, seems unattractive.

Apart from a curious argument by C.R. Baskervill[55] that Reynolds' book was not the main source of The Changeling, since all its details are not in God's Revenge and therefore one must look elsewhere for everything, little else has been discovered about influences on the play. The most interesting article by far on the depth of tradition behind The Changeling—something which increases our respect for Middleton, as a man who did, though to a far lesser extent than Shakespeare, treat themes of perennial folk-interest (cf. The Old Law)—is that of Ernst G. Mathews.[56] Mathews works through the versions of the tale of the bride who kills the virgin substituting for her, after the virgin has successfully deceived the bridegroom, from its earliest beginnings in Persia. He gets as close to Cespedes as he can, although here a link seems to be missing (p.191). He regards the episode as very necessary to the whole conception of De Flores and The Changeling as we have them, although even so he believes that the play has gone sufficiently to bits, by the time (act IV) the interpolated material is put in, for the playwright to be merely making a virtue of necessity. And, he adds, "it made necessary the creation of the pert maid, Diaphanta ... and.... gave the reasons for the best scenes, those which show De Flores exercising his demonic power over Beatrice-Joanna" (p.193). Despite the seeming lack

54. Bedlam on the Jacobean Stage (Harvard, 1952), pp.34-35, 47-48. Bawcutt (edition, p.xxxvi) disposes judiciously of Reed's main points.
55. "Some Evidence for Early Romantic Plays in England," MP, XIV (1916-17), 104.
56. "The Murdered Substitute Tale," MLQ, XI (1945), 187-195.

of enthusiasm Mathews seems to show here, he finishes by admitting that the honours go to Middleton for giving this folk-motif any genuine significance.[57] Probably Middleton also knew that other versions had the substitute bride dying in the fire rather than in a well outside, as Digges had it. This is G.P. Baker's[58] best point in support of the theory that Legrand D'Aussy gave Middleton his wedding-night episode.

Somewhere also in Middleton's mind must have been running the legend of Beauty and the Beast, the tale of how Beauty's loathing and fear grew to tenderness and understanding, which finally wrought a transformation in the Beast himself. How old this fairy-tale is in England I do not know, but most modern readers will be familiar with it from Cocteau's film treatment. Beatrice, speaking of the murder of Alonzo, says "I have kiss'd poison for't, strok'd a serpent" (V.iii.66) in reference to De Flores. It is possible that Middleton knew of the alleged transformation, by kissing, of a serpent to a person which took place in Cesena, in 1464.[59] The transformation motif is put to ironic use, for Beatrice never has the necessary goodness to wreak the charismatic change. It is she who undergoes the change, although in certain respects she believes she sees De Flores has become more attractive (V.i.72). In the end the poisonous serpent she has kissed and stroked has transformed her : "Oh, thou art all deform'd" Alsemero tells her (V.iii.77). In the crucial transformation scene where she caresses De Flores (II.ii.), her heart is full of deceit. Those critics who believe that the title refers only to the subplot are to my mind myopic ; the term

57. Why S. Schoenbaum, in his book on Middleton's Tragedies and their sources, chose to ignore the Cespedes-Digges contribution, I have no idea.
58. "A new source of The Changeling," p.87.
59. See F.J. Child, English and Scottish Popular Ballads (New York, 1957), V, 290. Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk-lore (Bloomington, 1956) has a considerable entry under motif D 735.2, but is of no use in deciding how early the Beauty and the Beast legend was known in England.

means "The Changer" and clearly refers to Beatrice.

When we turn to Reynolds we find that all is unsophisticated, uncompelling, and prolix. Up to III.ii. Middleton and Rowley stay with Reynolds, but thereafter the influence of the Digges narrative begins to assert itself, especially in the scene (III.iv.) of the demand for a reward. I.i., a long scene, uses up pp.106-117 of the Reynolds' story. Rowley changes the adverse wind (p.109) to a fair wind for sailing which Alsemero, to his cost, ignores. He adds Jasperino as a companion for Alsemero (a character Middleton does not develop), and puts in Diaphanta long before we hear of her in the source. In The Changeling, Alsemero is much more of a gentleman, and Beatrice a more deceitful girl than in Reynolds, for Alsemero is disinclined to persist in courting Beatrice when he hears of Alonzo's suit from Vermandero, and Beatrice gives no hint in the church that she wishes the stranger to moderate his attentions. As far as one can tell, the Beatrice of Reynolds never cared much for Alonso (p.116). Vermandero in The Changeling is a purblind, complacent old man who never suspects that Beatrice is eyeing Alsemero more affectionately than Alonzo—indeed, through murder, adultery and arson he never latches on to anything or has any misgiving. In Reynolds, he drives his daughter in a coach to Briamata to keep her out of Alsemero's way (p.117). Middleton creates the impression that the old man of The Changeling spoilt his girl rather badly. Yet Reynolds' Beatrice is capable of playing at double-standard morality (either that or her concept of Christian morality is confused) : on p.111, she attempts, with a self-regarding coyness, to rebuke Alsemero for misusing the church and at the same time claim she is unworthy of his flatteries. Again, one of the key words in The Changeling, "judgment", is a word Reynolds employs frequently (pp.113, 124, 126, 130, 131, 134).

Undoubtedly it is the earlier introduction of the ugly De Flores that makes the course of events in The Changeling so different. Rowley seems unable to do much with him, so foreign

to his style is the idea of an evil passion personified which impotently persists despite contempt. As a result, Reynolds' De Flores has none of the cynical confidence of Middleton's, who knows his turn will come with a girl like Beatrice. Also, for dramatic telescoping, Beatrice's marriage is very imminent—a week away—in The Changeling, whereas in Reynolds Alonso's engagement is not yet settled.

In II.i. Beatrice continues her underhand affair with Alsemero through Jasperino. Like Rowley, Middleton rapidly covers a lot of Reynolds' spacious ground, picking the story up at p.123. The intervening pages, 117-123, dealing with the removal of Beatrice to Briamata, are not to the purpose. Again De Flores bulks large in the action, suffering a second vicious rebuttal from Beatrice. Tomazo, Alonzo's brother, the play's doubting Thomas, is brought in just where Reynolds introduces him. He is the prudent man whose eyes are not blinded by love. Reynolds' Beatrice persuades Alsemero to leave town whilst she works to alter her father's feelings in the matter of her engagement, but in II.ii. Middleton brilliantly changes this episode. As soon as Beatrice has decided that duelling is too dangerous for her beloved to risk, her mind leaps to De Flores. In Reynolds we do not hear of him until much later when Beatrice is in need of a murderer (p.127).

II.ii., of course, is the celebrated scene in which Beatrice "transforms" the ugly De Flores into a becoming servant. Before, according to her, he had been guilty of "uneccessary blabbing" (I.i.98), but now he becomes gradually the "wondrous necessary" creature of the ending. Reynolds has no hint of this scene, as indeed he could not have had ; Middleton follows Reynolds rather closely (end of II.ii.-III.ii.), except for the actual details of the killing itself and the incident of the finger cut from the corpse (cf. pp.128-130).

III.iv., the second most celebrated scene, shows the first traces of Digges' servingman, called the Biscayner. Reynolds' De Flores is content with "many kisses" (p.130) for his deed,

but the Biscayner, after years of service for the Argentino family and the beautiful Isdaura, is by no means content with less than a virginity (Gerardo, p.104). Yet even with Reynolds and Digges to hand, it is clear that this scene's greatness is essentially Middleton's. "The tragedy," writes Barker,[60] "is ... nearly complete at this point." Beatrice's entrapment is, in an awful sense, the result of her break for freedom, which involves withdrawing confidences from priest, father and lover alike[61] ; her desire to go it alone leaves her lost in a maze with only one source to rely on, her Satanic lover. Impersonation, murder, deceit, treachery and death are the fruits of this original and central scene.

IV.i. is the virginity-test scene, obviously leading into the episode from Digges where Isdaura employs the virtuous but corruptible Julia. In IV.ii. Middleton, realising it was high time the subplot began to make contact with the tragic action, has the missing Antonio and Franciscus suspected of murder. Equally he realised that it was not possible to follow Reynolds very closely here, since Reynolds' Alsemero suddenly develops an unreasonable jealousy (p.132), unless perhaps The Changeling's virginity-testing is an amusing way of expressing this suspicion. Reynolds would be increasingly hard to follow anyway, as he has the first adultery between De Flores and Beatrice at this point (p.133) and adds the unconvincing abandonment of all pretense in Beatrice's affair with De Flores. Apart from Alsemero's incontinent slaughter of his wife and her lover, Middleton has scarcely anything more to take from Reynolds.[62] Tomazo's renewed and

60. R.H. Barker, Thomas Middleton, p.127.
61. Beatrice, in short, becomes unloved ; and her "deformity" proceeds from this. See Anna Freud's remark in E. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York, 1964), p.162.
62. Reynolds continues from pp.138-146 about how Alsemero killed Tomazo and forfeited his own life to protect his wife's murderous crime from being revealed. Reynolds has clearly left out the motive for this concealment by error. For details see S. Schoenbaum, Middleton's Tragedies, pp.136-137.

uncompromising demands for justice over his brother are the exception, which occupy much of IV. ii., and seem to be a borrowing from events which take place after Beatrice has died (pp. 140-141). Actually, it is ironical indeed that Alsemero should be challenged to a duel after all by a Piracquo, when Beatrice had gone to such lengths to avoid one. Now she seems not even to notice this quarrel.

In the course of IV.ii. Beatrice's request to come to her bridal bed in the dark is referred to, a borrowing from Gerardo p.105 ; and by V.i. Digges' tale concerning Roberto and Isdaura has completely taken over from Reynolds, with some important changes. In Digges, the desperate Isdaura sets fire herself to "the dining roomes Tapistry, with a Torch", since she has no help, and since the man who took her virginity was the Biscayner, now dead. In short, Isdaura is a much more resolute character than Beatrice ; she is also much less guilty, since there is some justification for her murder of the Biscayner. Beatrice tries to manage things herself, but as De Flores puts it

> You are so rash and hardy, ask no counsel,
> And I could have help'd you to an apothecary's daughter,
> Would have fall'n off before eleven....
> (V.i.20-22)

Beatrice's one great weakness is that she has not the foresight—foresight which amounts to a sense of morality—to realise where her sudden but deliberate decisions are leading. De Flores is quite clear about such things. The fire itself is akin to the one in Hengist, coming as it does at the height of the illicit partnerships. For Diaphanta, it is an illustration of Paul's statement : "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

With no help forthcoming from Reynolds or Digges, the play proceeds with some contrarieties towards its second climax—the climax of death, sealing that of damnation. Tomazo challenges De Flores (V.i.), whereas in Reynolds they never even meet. Interestingly, Tomazo dwells briefly on

the ugliness of De Flores, as if it were becoming clear that no beautifying transformation has in fact taken place. But after the warm praise which has been lavished on him over the fire-fighting incident, it does come a little unexpectedly. Beatrice, who "in seeking to conceale her whoredome, must discouer her murther" (Reynolds, p.135), makes a confession which Rowley handles with marked skill in V.iii.60-72. It has often been averred that through the alchemy of collaboration both dramatists are sublimed to a new potency of expression,[63] and it is certainly true that Rowley writes with unusual effectiveness during this last scene. It has been called a scene of pointless violence, but after all De Flores knows he is to die for killing Piracquo. He might as well take the chance to despatch Beatrice, so that no-one else can have her :

> I have drunk up all, left none behind
> For any man to pledge me.
> (V.iii.170-171)

But Rowley mismanages the final disposing of the subplot, which lingers on after the catastrophe of the main protagonists.

Critics in general have liked the play well, and have treated it as a serious study in morality, the failure of judgment, and passion. T.S. Eliot[64] and Helen Gardner[65] see it as a document charting the classic progress of damnation, from the first mistaken summoning of an evil power --to habitual commerce with that spirit. Or perhaps not "mistaken", nor "an error of judgment, an error of will" (Gardner, p.322), but

63. Denied by Barker, p.122.
64. "Thomas Middleton," Selected Essays (1962), pp.83-93.
65. "Milton's 'Satan' and the Theme of Damnation in Elizabethan Tragedy," English Studies (1948), collected by F.P. Wilson, pp.46-66. Reprinted in R.J. Kaufmann's edition of Elizabethan Drama (New York and Oxford, 1961), pp.320-341.

rather a wilful and unnatural act of freewill. And the obedient servant becomes the master ; honourable wedlock becomes antipathetic to the world of selfish desires. The means adopted has a vital effect on the end obtained, so that if the means is unworthy and the end worthy, there can be no question but that, when reached, the worthy end will be a distorted thing. The heart of the traveller is all, it seems.

How guilty is Beatrice in changing her mind about Alonzo ? Probably it is the manner in which she decides to do it and the manner in which Alsemero accepts the disappearance of the former fiancé that makes up the guilt. The prevailing manner is readiness,[66] posed by Middleton as the antithesis of moral fibre. "Beatrice," says Hibbard, "becomes a criminal for the simple natural human reason that she cannot face the moral problem posed by the fact that she is about to marry one man and has fallen in love with another."

Too many people have tried to change this essentially simple truth into something else,[67] that all is well until the evil spirit of the play is summoned. De Flores is an agent who kills in accordance with other people's murderous thoughts ; he takes all four lives in the play. The play is a fine one because of its central simplicity, and is unique amongst Middleton's work for its freedom from personal obsessions. Only in the virginity test do we catch a glimpse of the dramatist's sexually curious younger self ; but this play is most atypical in its patterns and characters. It would seem that Middleton had entered a new phase of his development when he stopped writing tragedy. Only a political satire and a comedy remained to come ; if he had lived, he might have produced a play which needed to be only a little better than The Changeling for

66. G.R. Hibbard's word : see "The Tragedies of Thomas Middleton and the decadence of the Drama," in Renaissance and Modern Studies, I (1957), pp.56-57.
67. I. Ribner, Jacobean Tragedy (London, 1962), p.129, claims absurdly that Beatrice and De Flores have always been damned, and only have to learn the fact.

it to rank with the finest dramatic work in any literature.

The play dates from early 1622, although Middleton could scarcely have put in material from Digges before March or April 1622.[68] However that may be, the Lady Elizabeth's company put the play on at the Phoenix in May of the same year.[69] One would guess Rowley himself played one of the feigned madmen or Lollio. At a production in Leeds by the University Dramatic Society, in 1960, the subplot was used most effectively to give a sense of uncontrolled wildness behind the civilized veneer of the main action in Vermandero's castle. The subplot must have been condemned by many a critic who has never seen the play ; although there is no doubt that the maturity of the characterisation in Middleton's part reduces Rowley's work to inadequacy.

SOURCES

Main plot : John Reynolds, The Trivmphs of Gods Revenege (1621), Book I, History IV. ; Leonard Digges, Gerardo the Vnfortvnate Spaniard (1622), pp.89-107.

Subplot : ? The Family of Love (1604).

68. See G.E. Bentley, Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 863.
69. See Bentley, I, 183. Christopher Beeston, lately from Prince Charles' men, was playing for the new Lady Elizabeth's company. Certainly The Changeling seems to have inaugurated years of prosperity at the Phoenix. By 1623 Rowley was a King's man.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Middleton's Late Comedies

After the powerful tragedies which he had written by 1622, Middleton returned to his old medium of comedy in The Spanish Gipsy (1623) and A Game at Chesse (1624). Both plays seem to have been successes, but to the modern reader they seem hasty and lacking both in power and meaning. Actually, neither play is really a comedy, The Spanish Gipsy being closer to tragi-comedy and A Game at Chesse a political satire. Throughout these years Middleton was City Chronologer and writer of official entertainments for the City, and doubtless he was often too busy or too tired to put much effort into his last plays. After the scandal of 1624 over A Game at Chesse, Middleton appears to have ceased writing for the stage altogether and devoted his time to civic writing. We can only speculate as to the plays we might have had from his hand if he had not been under the constant necessity of producing the mayoral "triumphs" which I shall review in the next chapter. Yet it must have been a matter of choice, for surely a dramatist of Middleton's stature might have become a sharer in a dramatic company after 1622.

The Spanish Gipsy was first published in 1653 with the names of Middleton and Rowley on the title-page, and again in 1661 with the same ascription. This ascription was challenged in 1924 by H. Dugdale Sykes,[1] an authority of whom T.S. Eliot[2] spoke highly. Sykes believed the play to be John Ford's, and adduced a number of parallels of varying value. R.H. Barker accepted Sykes' conclusion and did not treat the play in his book on Middleton. Samuel Schoenbaum[3]

1. Sidelights on the Elizabethan Drama (Oxford, 1924), pp.183-199.
2. Eliot said The Spanish Gipsy was "patently by other people" in For Lancelot Andrewes (London, 1928), p.110.
3. "Internal Evidence and the Attribution of Elizabethan Plays," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, LXV (1961), 108.

attacked this attribution, even though it was accepted by E.H.C. Oliphant and M. Joan Sargeaunt, on the ground that "External evidence cannot be ignored, no matter how inconvenient such evidence may be for the theories of the investigator." Doubtless Middleton and Rowley wrote the original play, but as one reads through Sykes' chapter, one is tempted more and more to agree that John Ford had some connection with the play. It seems rather obvious that John Ford wrote a good deal of the scene (I.iii.) in the bedroom where the rape takes place. Sykes' evidence for this scene is excellent, and Barker simply sets down one speech (I.iii.96-101) and challenges anyone to disbelieve his opinion that it is Ford's. However, there can be no doubt that Middleton and Rowley were the chief authors of the play ; there is the advertising of The Changeling in II.i., with the Rowleian line "To court our brave spectators ; I'll change my postures" (l. 107). Neither Middleton nor Ford wrote lines so ametrical and awkward. A look at the sources provides evidence that they underwent the Middleton treatment. In Women Beware Women, Middleton added two characters, the Ward and Sordido, from hints in Meslier's French novella. Pompeio in Meslier is certainly a booby, but he is by no means so gross and idiotic as the Ward is. Sordido seems to be entirely Middleton's addition, the pretentious fool who is supposed to be taking care of the idiotic fool. The Ward, we remember, had the habit of playing with a trapstick. Now in II.ii. of The Spanish Gipsy we again find that Sancho, the rich young heir, is interested in trapsticks (l.163). Soto, Sancho's man, is the more detached clown of the pair who, although condoning Sancho's folly, can often see through it. When we come to look at the originals of this pair, we shall see that Middleton has almost invented Sancho's folly in its entirety and added Soto on his own account. Further, Sancho is a "ward" to Pedro, just as the Ward is under the care of Guardiano in Women Beware Women.

There are two pieces of evidence which point to the fact that Ford may well have been

involved in The Spanish Gipsy. In 1621 he teamed up with Rowley and Dekker to write The Witch of Edmonton for the Prince Charles' men at the Phoenix or Cockpit in Drury Lane. On 5 November 1623 "The Gipsye, by the Cockpitt company" was seen by Prince Charles at Whitehall. Ford was thus friendly with Rowley. In 1633 Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore was produced at the Phoenix, a play which shows extensive acquaintance with Women Beware Women. Middleton's tragedy was not printed till 1657, and it is a fair assumption that Ford saw the play in manuscript after admiring it on the stage.

Still, no one has offered any good division of the play between Middleton and Rowley, let alone Ford as well. The two source stories, both novels in Cervantes' Novelas Examplares (1613), could have been read in French or Spanish. There is evidence that Middleton read Spanish and French supplied by The Triumphs of Honour and Industry (1617), but whether Rowley used a Spanish source for All's Lost by Lust is not clear. With matters as they stand, I think we must consider Middleton the composer of the serious plot with help from Ford, and tentatively give the comic gipsy action to Rowley. This division would accord with what we know about The Changeling. However, there can be no doubt that the whole matter is in need of close enquiry before any sound conclusions may be drawn.

The play reflects, as does The Changeling, Middleton's interest in Spanish affairs. George R. Price[4] lists a number of close similarities between the two play quartos. The Spanish Gipsy even received The Changeling's place of action by error, as if the two manuscript title-pages had lain close together at one time. As far as I know, Middleton's adaptation of these two exemplary novels is the first evidence of translation into English. There were ten editions in Spanish available by 1623, and a French translation of the first six novels by F. de Rosset

4. "The Quartos of The Spanish Gypsy and Their Relation to The Changeling," PBSA, LII (1958), 115-116.

published in 1615 and 1620-21. It is significant that both tales employed by Middleton may be found in de Rosset's book. Still, the forms of the names in The Spanish Gipsy correspohd more closely with those in Cervantes rather than de Rosset.

The main plot of the English play follows Cervantes's sixth tale, "de la fuerça de la sangre," rather closely. It is an improbable story, romantic and full of high passion, and it opens in a most sensational manner : Rodolfo, with four other young blades of Toledo, one night met a group of travellers at some distance from the city. They were, in fact, a family of gentle standing, and with them was their daughter, Leocadia, a girl aged sixteen or seventeen. Rodolfo, aged about twenty-two, was rather apt to commit insolent affronts to respectable people despite his nobleness of blood. On this occasion he decided he must enjoy Leocadia, and so, putting on makeshift masks, his companions set on the family whilst Rodolfo snatched the girl. Rodolfo then went home with his prize blindfolded, and slipped quietly into his own apartment in his parents' house. Before Leocadia could recover from the original shock, Rodolfo had taken her virginity. When she did come round, she implored her seducer to take her life as well. After some thought, however, she simply asked him to forget her and promised to forget him if he would put her out into the streets and leave her to make her own way home. Rodolfo's answer was to attempt to satisfy his lust further upon her. When even force failed, he left to find his friends and ask their advice about how to dispose of the girl. In the meantime, Leocadia searched the room and looked out on the garden for a means of escape, but found only a little silver crucifix which she put into her sleeve.

Rodolfo returned without having seen his companions, since he had decided to tell them that he had thought better of raping the girl. He therefore took Leocadia, blindfolded her, left her in Ayuntamiento square and made off quickly.

Whoever wrote act one of The Spanish Gipsy made short work of these events. In I.i. we meet the young Spanish bloods, Roderigo, Lewys and Diego. Roderigo desires his companions to help him to "a delicate body". Both of them have misgivings about the escapade, especially Lewys, but the seizure of Clara, daughter of Pedro de Cortes and his wife Maria, is a fait accompli within seconds. The adapter makes an important change at this point : Pedro de Cortes cries out his name, which Lewys recognizes and which fills him with fear. Evidently the author of I.i. was looking ahead to an irony whereby Lewys would find he had assisted at the rape of his own beloved, but after act one, this irony is lost sight of. In fact, Lewys never discovers the truth of what happened on the fateful night.

The high point of act one is the confrontation of Roderigo and Clara in the bedchamber. The rape has taken place and Clara is asking to be slain. Roderigo will not even speak to her, but simply offers money to make some reparation. This added incident offers a fine opportunity for pathos in the manner of Ford :

> I need no wages for a ruin'd name,
> More than a bleeding heart.
> (I.iii.28-29)

Clara is much more pathetic than Leocadia in this first act, but in her later treatment of Lewys she changes completely. There follows the appropriating of the crucifix by Clara, during Roderigo's absence, and the return of Roderigo to dispose of her. Before he does this, he asks for further intercourse with her, as Rodolfo did. Just as quickly, however, he repents himself and swears to two conditions Clara lays down : that he will say nothing about the rape, and that he will leave her where he found her. In I.v. Lewys is given the stage to lament his folly in assisting with the rape. Roderigo appears and in unctuous terms denies having raped the girl. The author makes it clear that Roderigo does not know whom he has raped, but that

he knows she is intended for Lewys : "henceforth crown thee / A happy .bridegroom", he says sincerely. Nevertheless he never takes much notice of this relationship later, even when he marries Clara. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the dramatist who opened the play added Lewys to Cervantes' story (his name is that of Leocadia's child resulting from the rape, named Luys, who is suppressed by the dramatists), and that later on he became an embarrassment who of necessity received short shrift.

After Leocadia has been left in the streets, Cervantes switches the interest to her. In the early hours she made her way home, and related every circumstance of the rape and the appearance of the house to her parents. After some discussion, it was decided not to seek redress either openly or by cunning, since the public shame which might follow would worsen the injury. As for Rodolfo, he had made plans to go to Italy on the advice of his father, and he shortly left "little thinking on that which passed betwixt himselfe, and Leocadia, as if there had never beene any such matter."[5]

The English dramatists return to Clara in II.ii. Pedro and Maria are prepared to wait for revenge without opening any public investigation. Lewys arrives to seek a favour, an interview with Clara ; during the colloquy, he proposes marriage to her. Clara is completely self-possessed and speaks with the judicious sensibility of a Jane Austen heroine :

> You shall not be unwelcome hither, sir ;
> That's all that I dare promise.
> (II.ii.47-48)

Roderigo, however, is suffering more misgivings than Lewys did as he prepares to leave for Salamanca in III.i. At least, he has told everyone that he intends to go to Salamanca, but his real plan is to remain in Madrid and find

5. Quotation from Exemplarie Novells ... Turned into English by Don Diego Pvede-Ser [i.e. James Mabbel (1640), p.191 ; Nouelas Exemplares (1613), f.131.

Clara again. He is one of Middleton's typical horror-struck sinners who revile themselves after the event, totally unlike the feckless Rodolfo. But he is more mature than Penitent Brothel ; he is aware how nice his conscience would seem to many who do not feel the discrepancy between ideals and reality (III.i.20-22). He meets some gipsies and joins them in order to remain in disguise in Madrid. The other tale from Cervantes, "de la Gitanilla", makes its influence felt all through the middle scenes of the play, and has a far greater effect on the principal plot than vice versa. Hence a good deal that happens to Roderigo in these scenes is not to be sought in Cervantes' sixth novel.

Cervantes continues to focus on Leocadia's life after the rape. It turned out that she was pregnant ; in due course she bore a son, christened Luys. At the age of seven, he was badly injured when he was knocked down by a horse ; the man who chanced to pick him up and take him home was none other than Rodolfo's father. Leocadia, who came to her son at the house whilst he was under the surgeon, soon recognised "the roome where her honour had it's end" (p.195). On checking with Doña Estefania, Rodolfo's mother, it was found that all the details of the time of the rape tallied with Rodolfo's departure. The crucifix was also identified. Soon Rodolfo was sent for to Naples, under the pretext that a fair wife had been found for him. Home he came, and the same night he arrived his mother taught him a lesson for his outrage. She presented him with a woman's picture and told him that this lady was the intended spouse. The picture was a portrait of "foulenesse itselfe" (p.200). After Rodolfo had protested at length that he sought a beauty rather than a woman of breeding or wealth, Dona Estefania sat the family and guests to supper and gave the signal for Leocadia's splendid entry. Leocadia was looking so beautiful that she "did dazle the eyes of the beholders" as if she were a goddess (p.203). The attraction was mutual ; Leocadia was ready to try again the brief experience she had had with Rodolfo. Indeed, the unexpressed passions grew so strong that Leocadia swooned, and Rodolfo was

soon "in the like case, lying with his face on Leocadia's breast" (p.205). At this point Doña Estefania informed her son that the unconscious lady was the intended bride, and as soon as she had recovered, a priest was brought forward and the pair married. Cervantes closes the story with an explanation of his title : "All which was brought to passe by the permission of Heaven, and by the force of that bloud, which the valiant, noble, and Christian Grandfather of Luisico, saw spilt upon the ground" (p.208). Blood, evidently, is thicker than water, and nobility of breeding will shine through the most vicious of lapses.

Rodolofo is, to the modern critic, an unreformed egoist, but sufficiently like Tom Jones to escape the severest censure. By stressing his devil-may-care attitude, one might justify Cervantes' passing over the inexcusable rape in the happy ending ; but the English dramatists' attempt to render him more acceptable is not at all in the direction of a careless conscience. After giving him an outburst of remorse shortly before becoming a gipsy, they allowed him the bride without many qualms. The inconvenience of having Lewys, the wronged friend, in the plot, could not prevent them from following Cervantes to a happy ending.

In III.ii. the major plot proceeds. Clara has shown no signs of pregnancy, so that some other method of getting her into Roderigo's apartment must be devised than by an accident to her child. Accordingly it is she herself who is knocked down in a crowd excited by a horse, and taken to the house of Fernando de Azevida, Roderigo's father. In III.iii. she is discovered languishing in a chair, asking questions about the situation of the house and the members of the family. Fernando says his wife is dead, but that he has a son and a lost daughter. Soon the rapist and Roderigo are identified as the same man, and as Fernando's sense of justice clashes with his paternal feelings, we seem close to a fine dramatic situation :

> I do not plead for pity to a villain ;
> O, let him die as he hath liv'd ...
> Point me my grave....
>
> (III.iii.84-85, 90)

But Clara asks that she be allowed to arrange a compromise, and the idea of marrying Roderigo to his victim takes root. The young sinner turns up with the gipsies at his father's house and produces a play. At his father's insistence he acts in it, taking the part of "a very rake-hell, a debosh'd fellow" (IV.ii.67). The play within the play is clearly modelled on "The Murder of Gonzago" in Hamlet. Fernando even gives advice to the players as Hamlet does. He also supplies the plot in which Avero, an elderly father, rebukes Lorenzo, his wild son, for his ungoverned ways. Thus Hamlet's attempt to make Claudius show his guilt by simulating the murder very closely finds an interesting comic imitation here. The plot is uncomfortably close to real life for Roderigo's liking. It also embodies the business of the ugly picture and the choosing of the wife from Cervantes. As the picture is shown to Roderigo on stage, Fernando bids a friend in the audience to observe closely. And then, the dramatists made an absolutely disastrous error. The picture, of course, should be of Clara, so that the audience in the know may observe Roderigo's shock at the proposed wife. But instead of following Shakespeare, they followed Cervantes, and made the picture an anonymous ugly woman. Why on earth should Roderigo make any significant reaction to such a portrait ? The intrusion of a violent part of the subplot sweeps away all speculation, mercifully.

At the end of IV.iii., Fernando tells Roderigo he has all along penetrated his disguise. The ugly lady must be his bride even as it was foreshadowed in the play, he adds. Roderigo says he saw a truly beautiful face at the play which affected him very strongly. Fernando agrees, as to the former compromise, to let the ugly lady be forgotten in favour of the beautiful, but penniless, one. Shortly after, in the next

scene, Roderigo and Clara pass over the stage as man and wife. The dramatists wisely omitted all the fainting fits and the stagey ending in Cervantes. However, they were still saddled with the problem of Lewys, Clara's suitor. Not content with this difficulty, they insisted on adding further complications in the last act. Roderigo's father informs him (V.i.11) that his wife is a wanton, and that he is reaping the reward for not marrying the girl he raped. But by V.i.38 the truth is out that Clara is both the victim and the bride. Roderigo, however, already knew that the girl he had raped was Lewys' mistress at I.v.42, and ought to have recognised her when he married her. There is not definitely a discrepancy here but Roderigo shows little surprise when Lewys comes in anger to claim his mistress. The main plot peters out at V.i.77 in a very strange manner, leaving Lewys dissatisfied, but having used up all the Cervantes material from the first source tale.

The second tale, "La Gitanilla", which gives its name to the English play, is the first story in the 1613 edition of the Novelas Exemplares. It is very long, occupying fols.1-38. This story really dominates the play, as a look at The Spanish Gipsy's dramatis personae shows : Fernando de Azevida, Corregidor of Madrid, although Roderigo's father in the main plot, is father to the little gipsy and takes his name, office and city from "La Gitanilla" ; Leocadia becomes Clara, the name of a judge's wife in Madrid ; Francisco de Carcamo is the father of Don Juan, who appears as John in the play ; Sancho takes his name from the young poet-page who joins the gipsies as Don Sancho but has it changed by them to Clemente ; amongst the gipsies, Guiamara, Pretiosa and Christiana take their names, respectively, from Doña Guiomar, wife to Fernando (his sister in the play), Preciosa, the little gipsy, whose real name is Costança de Azevedo, and Cristina, the bashful gipsy girl. Other names, such as Cardochia, also come from Cervantes' gipsy tale, as do certain geographical allusions.

The heroine of Cervantes' tale is Preciosa,

the beautiful young gipsy who turns out to be noble. But the gipsies she mingles with are a literary man's creation : "Charming as Preciosa is, her charm is not essentially the charm of the gipsy race ... Cervantes turns the difficulty by keeping his gipsies as much as possible in the background."[6] Middleton and Rowley must have realised Cervantes knew nothing about gipsies ; Middleton therefore arranged that they would turn out to be disguised nobility, and Rowley added songs galore full of high jinks in the countryside.

It is not difficult to guess that The Spanish Gipsy was begun as a dramatisation of "La Gitanilla", in the hope that the success of the delightful comedy Beggars Bush (before 1622) by Fletcher, and perhaps Massinger, might be repeated. It has been stated that this play employs "La fuerça de la sangre" for a source, and one finds the claim repeated in R.U. Pane's English Translations from the Spanish 1484-1943, p.80. Emil Koeppel[7] dealt with this mistaken claim long ago. Beggars Bush influenced quite strongly the way in which Middleton and Rowley treated Cervantes' gipsy tale. Preciosa in Cervantes turns out to be of noble blood, but the other gipsies do not. In both The Spanish Gipsy and Beggars Bush, nearly all the gipsies turn out to be noblemen disguised for political reasons. Fletcher's play also abounds in songs.

6. The Complete Works of Cervantes, ed. James Fitzmaurice-Kelly, vol. VII (Glasgow, 1902), xxxi.
7. Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen Ben Jonson's, John Marston's und Beaumont's und Fletcher's [1895], in Münchener Beiträge zur romanischen und englischen Philologie, Heft 11. One might note here that Pane also claims The Queen of Corinth (1616-17) employs "La fuerça de la sangre." G.E. Bentley says, in Jacobean and Caroline Stage, III, 400, that Macaulay denied this in 1932. Hence Middleton must be credited with the first definite use of Cervantes' Exemplary Novels.

H. Butler Clarke[8] warns, however, that "It is beside the point to compare the gipsies with the more realistic vagabonds of The Beggars Bush. for these gipsies are really ladies and gentlemen, and as such they act and speak."

Though Cervantes' tale of the little gipsy is long, there is not a great amount of action in it. Preciosa, apparent daughter to an old gipsy matron, was the leading turn in a gipsy troupe, being excellent at singing and dancing. She was a particularly moral child, singing a very pious song in Madrid on one occasion when we see her perform. A young page, who was also a poet, interested himself in her and promised to supply her with odes. Another young man, having once seen her, was so affected by her beauty that he came out of Madrid to seek her. This was Don Juan de Carcamo, but despite his wealth and rank, Preciosa was not sure she could love him. She therefore stipulated that he must join the gipsies and spend two years with them, and if he was then content to marry, she would consent. Just before he joined them, Preciosa performed in his father's house and accidentally dropped an ode given to her by the page. Its warm terms, when read out by a rather disagreeable gentleman present, caused Juan to turn white with faintness. But Preciosa gave assurances of her affection, and later Juan joined the gipsies under the name of Andres. He completely removed all traces of his identity, even slaughtering his ass. Rather than steal, however, with the other gipsies, he silently used his gold to bring home booty.

After many months, his courtship of Preciosa having gone well, Andres was seized by another attack of jealousy on the page's account. This young man appeared near the gipsy camp one night, in a lonely district, and was savaged by the dogs. He was treated by the gipsies, and Andres recognized him. After concocting a false account of his presence there, he later

8. Quoted from Representative English Comedies, ed. C.M. Gayley, vol. III (New York, 1914), 109.

truthfully told Andres that he had belonged to a noble house in Madrid and, due to an accidental killing, had had to leave in disguise for Italy. The gipsies were able to help him forward on his covert way ; thus it happened that the page stayed with them rather a long time. He too received a new name, Clemente.

One day, near Murcia, a misfortune befell Andres. A girl called Juana Carducha fell in love with him at first sight, and being young —between seventeen and eighteen—and impetuous, she proposed to him. When he refused, she became very angry, and played a mean trick on him to keep him near her. Into his baggage she slipped valuable plate and jewels, and then had the group searched when it was leaving town. During the search, a very hot-headed young soldier, nephew to the local governor, happened to sneer at Andres, and strike him, whereupon Andres slew him. Clemente got away, but Andres was gaoled under sentence of death. Preciosa was taken to the house of the Corregidor, Don Fernando de Azevedo, where she pleaded with his wife for Andres' life. It was the old gipsy matron, however, who provided the key to the apparent impasse. She brought out a little box which proved beyond a doubt that Preciosa was Costanca de Azevedo, and she added that she herself had stolen the child from Madrid in 1595. When Preciosa had pointed out to her mother that Andres was not a gipsy either, the old gipsy woman revealed that he was Don Juan de Carcamo, the son of a knight. The Corregidor, Don Fernando, went to the gaol and told the prisoner he might marry the little gipsy before his execution. The priest appointed, however, refused to marry the pair without a license and other documents, so that the Corregidor granted Andres more time. This was clearly the moment to reveal every detail of Andres' new situation, and once the local governor had heard of the quality of the persons involved in the killing, privilege prevailed and the sentence was expunged. Carducha owned that her charge had been false. A happy wedding took place which satisfied both families greatly, and, adds Cervantes, "vengeance was buried in

the joy of discovery of the couple, and mercy triumphed" (fol.38).

Middleton and Rowley's treatment of this material is perfunctory. They added a character called Alvarez, and made him gipsy leader ; in fact, he is a noble lord who has been banished, much like Gerrard in Beggars Bush. Between Alvarez and Lewys they created a blood-feud, as Alvarez had slain Lewys' father in a quarrel over a couple of hawks. This motif seems taken from Heywood's A Woman Killed with Kindness (1607) or its sources. We can almost go as far as H. Butler Clarke[9] and say of the subplot that "it belongs to Cervantes", except that it is sketchier and less exciting.

In I.v. Diego sees John in the small hours, walking the streets of Madrid and "strangely tickled / With rare conceited raptures" (ll. 84-85). It seems he is in love with a young gipsy. That is all the preparation in act one for a plot which completely usurps the centre of the play. In II.i. "La Gitanilla" comes into its own. Rowley seems here to get loose with his amiable, chatty, style, and spends the first seventy lines in talking about different kinds of gipsies. Cardochia is introduced early, no doubt because Cervantes' Carduchia and her sudden improbable infatuation were felt to be weaknesses. The gipsies are performing at her inn.

At II.i.117 we meet Sancho and Soto as well. Sancho is created out of Clemente, but resembles the earnest poet-page of Cervantes hardly at all. H. Butler Clarke (p.109) saw so little resemblance that he claimed "Louis, Sancho and Soto were added by the English playwrights, and lack, accordingly, the Spanish stamp." Sancho's "rhymes" are execrable. Although the things he does derive from Clemente's actions, they are made ridiculous and grotesque. I suspect Rowley played Sancho's foil, the added character Soto. At II.i.228 John accosts Guiamara and Constanza (Pretiosa), and asks for Constanza's hand. The trial period of two years is enjoined upon him.

In II.ii. the blood-feud between Lewys and Alvarez is introduced. We hear that the

9. Representative English Comedies, III, 115.

Conde Alvarez, and his wife and daughter, are missing, their whereabouts unknown. Lewys wants revenge for his dead father and is interested in having Alvarez' banishment repealed. This action moves with sporadic bursts through III.ii., IV.ii., V.i., in which scene Alvarez barters the secret of his identity for John's reprieve, and V.ii. In the latter scene Alvarez and Lewys meet to fight a duel, but after Alvarez has explained the amount of agonised penitence he has suffered, Lewys settles the quarrel and asks to be considered Alvarez' own son. Evidently Lewys, lover of Clara and enemy of the chief gipsy, was put in to cement the two tales together. Needless to say, he looks superfluous to both plots.

In III.i. Roderigo joins the gipsies as well. He is responsible for the play put on in Fernando's house, and drains off some of the attributes of Clemente in Cervantes. At Francisco de Carcomo's house there is a gipsy singing performance (III.ii.), presumably modelled on the one in which Juan faints with jealousy over the amatory ode. John has about four lines ; his jealousy is crowded out and he is reduced to expressing his love for Pretiosa in rhetorical shorthand :

> I am a-fire I'm sure (III.ii.57)
> Pit ? 'tis a grave to bury lovers in (III.ii.116).

Even this last remark is a direct quotation from Cervantes : "pues yo sé poco de hoyos, ó esse no es hoyo, sino sepultura de desseos viuos" (fol.8). In IV.i., John finally joins the gipsies ; his ass is slaughtered and buried. The dramatists were running desperately short of time, so into the same scene they crowded Cardochia's infatuation for John, now named Andrew, and her spiteful revenge. Diego is employed for this end, since we learn in a brief encounter that he loves Cardochia. Their quarrel reaches violence in IV.iii., although Diego is not slain by John, but only wounded. At the first sign of trouble for the gipsies, Sancho reveals his identity to his guardian, Don Pedro, and has to

suffer confinement. Once Roderigo is married to Clara, the remainder of act five is left clear to put in all of the complications at the end of "La Gitanilla". Pretiosa pleads for John's life, imitating the pathetic sweetness of Fletcher's Jaculin in Beggars Bush. She takes over Jaculin's mannerism of protestation, the expression "'Deed, la" (V.i.95), and Preciosa's defence of her honour and truthfulness (fols.32^{v}-33). John is sentenced to die ; Guiamara reveals who he is, and that she herself is the sister of Fernando, the Corregidor. We now learn that the "young daughter" mentioned in II.ii. was Fernando's daughter, committed to Guiamara when her mother died. A casket confirms the matter. John's pardon has been won by Alvarez, we recall ; Cardochia and Diego, for some mysterious reason, are also ready to marry.

If it were not for the survival of Cervantes' tale, it would be difficult to tell what was going on in the subplot. H. Butler Clarke's judgment, that we have basically "a play to which its authors contributed only the dialogue, one scene, a minor character and comic excrescences"[10] is just. The subplot coasts along, buoyed up by its source ; alone, it is impossible to follow, as critics who saw the Elizabethan Stage Society's revival in 1898 testified. On 5 April of that year, William Poel directed a single performance for which Swinburne had written a new prologue. H. Butler Clarke mentions the cool reception this whole effort received.

Middleton, clearly, did not write so much of the play, though I believe he was responsible for trying to transform Cervantes' egoistic Rodolfo into a man haunted by a sense of the evil maze he had lost himself in. Surely the man who planned the main action of The Changeling did not imagine two complex stories could be forced into one play, together with an added blood-feud, a play within a play, and two clowns.

10. Representative English Comedies, III, 113.

Karl Christ[11] had other suggestions for the possible sources of The Spanish Gipsy. Alexandre Hardy wrote both La Force du Sang and La Belle Egyptienne before Middleton's play, in 1611 and 1616 respectively. Juan Perèz de Montalbán wrote La Gitanilla de Madrid, apparently before 1620, but I do not find any of his work published before Middleton's death. Karl Christ himself did not doubt that Cervantes was Middleton's source, perhaps because both these dramatists' works were inaccessible before publication. Of Hardy's six hundred pieces, forty-one pastorals, tragedies and tragi-comedies were published in six volumes (Paris, 1624-28). The Spanish Gipsy was probably written in 1623, and acted by the Lady Elizabeth's men at the Phoenix. Middleton had written for them before, both before their reduction to a provincial group and after their re-formation in 1621 or 1622.[12] Rowley could not have acted in the play if Bentley's theory[13] is correct, that the united existence of the Lady Elizabeth's-Prince Charles' (I) company came to an end in 1615/16. Rowley, however, must certainly have had some motive for joining in a play for Lady Elizabeth's men whilst a Prince Charles' man. Later in 1623 he became a King's man, and entered into no further collaborations with Middleton. It is not beyond impossibility that Rowley did have a clown's part in The Spanish Gipsy. The changes to Sancho and the addition of Soto suggest a definite purpose.

I do not blame R.H. Barker for desiring to pass this play over to Ford. It is an instructive example of how not to employ source material, and in that respect as well as others is not at all typical of Middleton.

SOURCES

Main plot : Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Novelas Exemplares (1613), VI, "La fuerça de

11. Quellenstudien, pp.84-85.
12. G.E. Bentley, Jacobean and Caroline Stage, I, 182.
13. G.E. Bentley, Jacobean and Caroline Stage, I, 198.

la sangre" ; William Shakespeare, Hamlet (1603, 1623).

Subplot : Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Novelas Exemplares (1613), I, "La Gitanilla" ; John Fletcher, Beggars Bush (acted 1622).

We turn now to the most interesting play in Middleton's career after the tragedies, A Game at Chesse. As City Chronologer Middleton could not have failed to become increasingly aware of Spanish events as they touched England, King James, and James' son-in-law, Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate. Since Middleton had last worked carefully on a play, some important political developments had been taking place. Spain was now not so much a land of romance and high manners, but of Romish superstition and evil plotting. Of the political developments which had been taking place, the last three of the four I shall enumerate partook of a sensational nature. The Count Gondomar, Don Diego Sarmiento da Acuña, Spanish ambassador in London, retired in 1622, from his second period in the office, which had commenced in 1619. By Puritans and by loyal nationalists, which comprised most people except the Court party and the Catholics, he was heartily detested. The presses vented a steady stream of abuse against him and exposés of his "schemes" ; the pulpit urged James to adopt policies directly opposed to those which Gondomar successfully influenced him to follow.

The first of the sensational events was the departure in 1622 from England for Rome of Marco Antonio de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalatro, regarded till then as a notable convert to Protestantism. He had remained in England six years, years in which he was well treated and well rewarded. The English populace, not being familiar with his learned anti-Papal writings, were convinced that he had been acting hypocritically and avariciously throughout, and they also believed it was Gondomar who had been responsible for arranging the downfall of the Archbishop

which followed on his return. In A Relation sent from Rome (1624), the unhappy end of de Dominis is reported ; imprisoned by the Inquisition, he died there and in December 1624 his body was burned after a pronouncement that he was deprived of honour, benefit and dignity. This was the second sensation.

In 1623 the most notorious event of the four took place, the one which for all English people was of greatest moment and anxiety, and one which would have been known far outside London at a popular level as the other three events may not have been. Gondomar was regarded as solely responsible for manipulating James to the point of sending Charles and the Duke of Buckingham to Madrid and for covertly intending the whole projected match to be a failure from the start. A whole group of pamphlets came out on the Spanish marriage between Charles and the Infanta alone,[14] and when Charles came home without a bride in mid-1623, a spate of reports replaced the controversial books.

Middleton had now enough ammunition for a political satire on Gondomar and enough detail for a dramatic action, so that he was in a position to write a comedy such as would succeed more brilliantly than any he had written before. He had not written satire for a long time and never consistently, but his early bent had been towards Marstonian satire and several of the comedies for the child actors had contained satire of London types. After A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (1613), in part a cutting attack on the Puritans, he had mellowed to a tragicomic mood ; "the cynical view," writes Professor W. Power,[15] "would be that he was bought off," since Middleton's civic employments began in 1613. It appears that Middleton began work on his satire sometime early in 1624, for there exists an early manuscript

14. E.g., the reasoned Considerations vpon the Treaty of Marriage (1623).
15. "Thomas Middleton vs. King James I," p.529.

version[16] of the play which has no Fat Bishop's part in it, and in which a significant but not wholly complete change was made to the White King's Pawn's part. The reason for such a change is not far to seek, because in 1624 Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, was impeached before the Lords on four articles, the chief of which was receiving bribes of the farmers of the customs in his capacity of Lord Treasurer. The Duke of Buckingham was really behind the sacrifice of this financial genius, who rose from the rank of apprentice, went into the civil service, and rose again under the patronage of the Howards, to become Lord Treasurer from 1621 to 1624. In G.E.Aylmer's[17] words, in 1623 "the attempt to bring about a Spanish marriage alliance reached its absurd, even fantastic climax, with an unofficial, impromptu trip across Europe by Prince Charles ... accompanied by Buckingham [who] galloped across Europe incognito, complete with false beards, and arrived at the Spanish Court, only to find that they were the victims of Spanish diplomatic finesse.... The Spaniards, who had perhaps never taken the marriage project seriously, had totally out-manoeuvred them, and the King's misgivings about this wild trip were well justified. Though he got his favourite and his son back safely, the whole adventure was a humiliating fiasco" ; if we remember this, and that Buckingham was in a great measure responsible for Cranfield's fall, there is perhaps some justice in thinking that support from high places prompted Sir Henry Herbert to license the satire. L.B. Wright holds this view, but R.C. Bald[18] points to the satirical thrusts at Buck-

16. See R.C. Bald, "An Early Version of Middleton's 'Game at Chesse'," MLR, XXXVIII (1943), 177-186. It will be obvious that I am not only citing Bald's edition (Cambridge, 1929) in this chapter, but that I am relying heavily on all his published work on the play.
17. The Struggle for the Constitution 1603-1689 (London, 1963), p.64.
18. The two letters appear in TLS, 16 February and 17 May (1928), p.112 and p.379 respectively.

ingham in the play, in act five. He adds that James could scarcely have known anything about what Middleton and the King's men were brewing; indeed "it is possible that the actors waited until James left London on 15 July (Cal. of S. P. (Dom.), 1623-25, p.311) and by 6 August would have been sufficiently far away from the capital to be unable to take action until several days had elapsed."

Basic to the play, then, are the question of the Spanish marriage and Gondomar's hated ambassage to England (some historians such as Garrett Mattingly are inclined to dismiss Middleton's attack as irrelevant, but G. P. V. Akrigg's chapter called "Gondomar"[19] excellently illustrates how Middleton has caught the Spaniard's aloofness, arrogance, wit and guile. In addition it now appears that Middleton was right about the part Gondomar played in conspiring to destroy de Dominis[20]. To Londoners, Gondomar was the stage Machiavellian come to life, and thus Middleton portrays him). One might also add that the spread of the Jesuits' power and influence was from the start a major element in Middleton's design. Then came the charges of corruption laid against Cranfield on 15 April 1624; and finally, Newes from Rome : Spalato's Doome (1624), which detailed the disaster which overtook de Dominis when, some time after his arrival in Rome, he was imprisoned by the new Pope's regime. The pamphlet reports that he endured "a mortall incurable consumption, he having (as is supposed) of late breathed his last in the Castle of Saint Angelo" (p. 31). If this information is correct, the pamphlet probably did not appear until after 8 September 1624, too late for Middleton to have used it.

Nearly everything is known about the circumstances attending the production of the play, Friday 6 August to Monday 16 August[21], although

19. Jacobean Pageant (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 321-33.
20. Jacobean Pageant, p. 315.
21. All information about the production is from Bald's edition, pp.19-23.

there is no agreement as to how Sir Henry Herbert was prevailed upon to license a play which represented two living Christian monarchs. The pamphlet literature which gave Middleton his material for the portraits of de Dominis (said by Bald, edition, p.147, to be Spalato's Doome) and Gondomar (Thomas Scott's The Second Part of Vox Popvli)[22] has been well studied, but a gap in approaches to the play has been left by a lack of any study of the chess allegory.[23] Middleton actually used one chess book, Arthur Saul's The Famous Game of Chesse-play (1614), as an immediate source, and this book undoubtedly furnished him with the idea of the checkmate by discovery. I have listed borrowings from this book and from Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny's Historie (1601) and put them in appendix D ; the point I make there about the random borrowings is that Middleton must have been using a commonplace book, a fact which enabled him to wrote at least the latter part of the play in one month.[24]

Arthur Saul's book, however, is merely a chess manual for the beginner, and does not speak of the identification commonly made between chessmen and an army, or chessmen and a commonwealth. James Rowbothum's translation of Damiano da Odemira's The Playe of the Cheasts (1562) has the following remark : "For this game hath a certaine allusion or similitude of a ranged battel" ; and he says that politic wisdom may be gained by playing the game whilst "comparing it to a publick gouernemẽt" (A1v). Miss Margery Fisher[25] alludes to Francisco Colonna's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (trans. 1592), in which

22. The resemblance was first recognised by John Woolley in August 1624 : see L. Hotson, Shakespeare's Wooden O (London, 1959), pp.16-17.
23. J.T.McCullen, Jr., has examined the use of games in the drama from 1550 to 1635 (MLQ, XIV [1953], 7-14).
24. See Bald's edition, pp.15 and 19. At that, one month is the absolute maximum time available.
25. Introduction and Notes to Women Beware Women, an unpublished University of Oxford dissertation (1937), p.102.

chess is played "by living people and with people used as men ; nymphs move gracefully about a plot of land marked out as a chessboard" (pp.64-65). The manner of the taking of human pieces which Colonna describes may perhaps have been used by the King's men. Another book from the Elizabethan period is Ludus Scacchiae (1597), a translation in part from G. Blochino. The book is also partly lifted from James Rowbothum's book of 1562, and partly "A prety and pleasant Poeme of a whole Game played at Chesse" between Mercury and Apollo. But behind all these English interpretations lies perhaps Caxton's Game and Playe of the Chesse (1474),[26] a translation from the French, concerned as much with English polity as with chess. William Axon writes of it : "The author's aim was almost exclusively ethical. It was to win men to a sober life and to the due performance of individual and social duties, that the preacher exhausted his stores of learning ..." (p.lxxi). Of course, even if Middleton had such a rare book to hand, we should remember that it portrays the older game which had almost everywhere disappeared by 1550. The Portuguese Damiano's writings were largely responsible for a spread of the knowledge of the new, advanced rules, to which modern chess players adhere almost entirely.[27]

But when all this has been said, there remains the essential brilliance of conceit behind making the Spanish Catholic house black, and the English Protestant house white. Nobody had done it before, however obvious as it may seem to us, and it was perfectly suited to its purpose. Who, then, are the pieces and pawns ? More articles have been devoted to this aspect of A Game at Chesse than to any other. E.C. Morris[28] was one of the early guessers, and he gave the houses

26. Vincent Figgins added the "Remarks" to a superb facsimile reprint of 1855 ; William E.A. Axon put out an edition with fuller critical apparatus in 1883.
27. I think "en passant" was not in use ; and one could lose by staling a game.
28. "The Allegory of A Game at Chesse," Eng. Stud., Band XXXVIII (1907), pp.39-52.

as follows :

White : King - James ; Queen - the dead Anne ; Bishop - Archbishop Abbot of Canterbury ; Knight - Prince Charles ; Rook (Duke) - Buckingham.

King's Pawn - Earl of Bristol (Digby) ; Queen's Pawn - Elizabeth, James' daughter ; Bishop's Pawn - Frederick, Elector Palatine.

Black : King - Philip IV ; Queen - Isabella ; Bishop - Father General of the Jesuits ; Knight - Gondomar ; Rook (Duke) - Count Olivares, Philip's chief minister.

King's Pawn - not identified ; Queen's Pawn - Archduchess Isabella ; Bishop's Pawn - Duke of Bavaria ; Knight's Pawn - Emperor Ferdinand.

Amongst this list there are items with which no-one would quarrel ; in the White House, James, Carles and Buckingham are obviously right ; in the Black, Philip, Gondomar and Olivares are equally right. So far I have made no mention of the Fat Bishop, who is de Dominis, and very obviously an addition. At first Bald[29] thought that John Underhill played the part, but then he thought it over and decided what is extremely likely, that William Rowley got a part written into the play for himself.

The list of regal names given to the pawns stems from Morris's desire to see the gelding of the White Bishop's Pawn as a representation of the loss of the Palatinate to Spanish forces. No-one since his article came out has been able to agree that the slender action of the subplot can bear that much weight of political significance. The two Queens have also been seen with much plausibility as the Churches of England and Rome, but J.R. Moore[30] persuasively argues that the title-page of Quartos I and II(a) shows the

29. Edition, p.23 ; TLS, 6 February 1930, p.102.
30. "The Contemporary Significance of Middleton's Game at Chesse," PMLA, L (1935), 762. But see Bald's weighty argument on p.11 of his edition.

Queens to be Anne and Isabella. The White King's Pawn is surely Lionel Cranfield, after originally being Tobie Mathew, son of the Archbishop of York. Why would Mathew have been a good target for satire , and then afterwards Cranfield a better one ? Mathew had been a friend of Gondomar and became a Jesuit ; then Cranfield was impeached, and as he was disliked by Buckingham and his faction for his independent ways, and for maintaining that Charles and Buckingham were overspending wildly in Spain (James transmitted in his despatches something of his Lord Treasurer's attitude towards demands for more jewels, and horses for tilting, made by Charles and Buckingham); and disliked by the Protestant and anti-Spanish party, who wanted war with Spain or in the Palatinate[31] for his counsel that England could not afford it, hardly anyone wanted to save him. James actually wanted to, but he no longer had control over Buckingham ; for he knew that Cranfield was an able servant and took no more bribes or rewards than many another man in high government office. It is sad therefore to record that the representation of Cranfield as the pawn who wore a black shirt under his white one (III. i.288) is a piece of unjust advantage taken by Middleton.

If we accept the White Bishop as the Primate of all England and the Black Bishop as the Father General of the Jesuits, we have as many probably correct identifications as matters. Amongst the black pawns the Queen's Pawn is a secular Jesuitess (so identified by Sir A.W. Ward) ; the Bishop's Pawn may well glance at Henry Flood (or Floyd, elder brother of John Floyd, Bullen's candidate for this part), a Jesuit, who was chief agent for transporting

31. S.O. was one of those who called for war : A Second Part of Spanish Practises ... With, More Excellent reasons of greater consequence, deliuered to the Kings Maiesty to dissolue the two treaties both of the Match and the Pallatinate, and enter into Warre with the Spaniards (1624).

newly-converted English nuns to the Continent.[32] John Gee[33] calls him "Father Floud Iesuit, their prime Procurator."

Middleton needed to give all these people characteristic action and now and again to represent some actual occurrence, so he turned to the anti-Spanish and anti-Jesuitical literature of the day. A.H. Bullen[34] listed five of the most important sources, Thomas Scott's Vox Populi (1620) and The Second Part of Vox Popvli (1624), John Gee's Foot out of the Snare and New Shreds of the Old Snare (1624), and Thomas Robinson's Anatomie of the English Nunnerie at Lisbon (1622). Thomas Robinson, and John Gee especially, are amusingly sharp propagandists in their own right ; Middleton captures Gee's peculiar kind of sarcasm in one scene only, the scene of the penitential taxes (IV.ii.85ff.). Then Bald went on to give a truly compendious list, which as it proved was still not complete. Of the list of thirteen books scattered through the "Notes" to Bald's edition, I cannot accept all of them as definitely known to Middleton. The five important ones are Scott's Second Part of Vox Popvli, Robinson's Anatomie, The State-Mysteries of the Iesvites (1623), originally by Pierre Gosselin in French, The Friers Chronicle (1622) by T.G., and Vox Coeli (1624). John Gee actually copies passages out of Robinson's book, for instance in talking about the Lisbon nunnery on p.115 of his New Shreds, so that Robinson rather than Gee should be given the credit when Middleton is copying verbatim.

It was Thomas Scott in his Vox Populi who gave Middleton the idea of presenting Gondomar in the self-revelatory way in which he talks about himself. Gondomar has three long important speeches in the play—on his first entrance (I. i.263-291), based on a passage in The State-Mysteries of the Iesvites,[35] a speech which re-

32. See Thomas Robinson's Anatomie of the English Nunnerie at Lisbon (1622), pp.8-9, cited in Bald's edition on p.156.
33. New Shreds of the Old Snare (1624), p.114.
34. Works, VII, 4.
35. See Bald's edition for the "Notes" to each of these passages, and my appendix D detailing borrowings Bald overlooked.

veals his kinship with Guardiano, another clever man who can disguise egregious mischief as a sweet sensation ; on his entrapment of the Fat Bishop (III.i.79-116), based on passages in Vox Coeli and Vox Populi ; and on his pawn's escape from non-absolution for the gelding of the White Bishop's Pawn (IV.ii.43-77), based on The Second Part of Vox Popvli. Finally, in another vein Gondomar reveals his celebrated fount of learning with which he occupied James by the hour, at V.iii.7-55, based partly on Pliny. Altogether he has a prodigious amount to say, mostly in speeches twenty or more lines long ; if Middleton had not been in such a hurry, he surely would have trimmed down this character's part. Scott in his Vox Populi pictures a meeting of all the Spanish states at Mouson, Aragon, for the purpose of hearing how the Catholic cause had been furthered in England. In a diffident tone Gondomar boasts :

> I underwrought that admirable Engine Raleigh, and so was the cause his voyage (threatning much daunger and domage to us) was overthrowne, and himselfe returning in disgrace, I pursued almost to death, neither (I hope) need I say almost, if all things hit right, and all strings hold.
>
> (C1)

It is not easy to point to one definite writer who gave Middleton his idea for presenting de Dominis. He enters imperiously in II.ii., using obscure similes and talking about his books. Middleton must have known that a favourite notion of de Dominis' was that the Christian world could be reconciled and re-united, just as James with equal fantasy believed that he could make peace in Western Europe. (De Dominis' idea is alluded to in Newes from Rome [1624], p.26.) Yet he ignored it and stressed the Archbishop's contemptuous pride and gluttony (Newes from Rome, p.14). With some penetration Middleton makes him refer to his homesickness for the flowers of the Italian and Dalmatian countryside (II.ii.37-41), a list which seems to come from a herbal of 1619 by Dodoens. From the Jesuit quarter came attacks on him by John Floyd, in Latin, including one called

Hypocrisis M.A. de Dominis detecta (1620) ; from the Anglican quarter came [The] Arch-Bishop of Spalato, his Shiftings in Religion (1624), by Richard Neile. This book prints de Dominis' letter first requesting permission to depart (B3-B3^{v}), which alludes to his homesickness. Yet only Newes from Rome has the tone of vituperation and scoffing which is suitable material for Middleton's attack on the fat man who is "perswaded that this Flesh would fill / The biggest Chayre Ecclesiasticall" (III.i.9-10). It would be reassuring to know when Newes from Rome was entered on the Stationers' Register, but there is no record. Middleton makes much play with a jest de Dominis made on Gondomar, that he knew a cure for his fistula—a halter ; and perhaps we are after all dealing with a portrait from hearsay. The incident whereby Gondomar traps de Dominis into going home to Italy is, on the other hand, plentifully documented from the period. As Bald says (edition, p.147), the account in Newes from Rome (pp.22-24) is the nearest to the play's treatment at III.i.1-78. De Dominis was actually challenged in an official letter which Neile printed (Arch-Bishop of Spalato, p.55), which alleged :

> yea, that you haue a safe conduct by the procurement of Spain from the Pope to returne, and many other such like matters.

Middleton added a promise of the Papal Supremacy for de Dominis, in the letter which Gondomar brought from Paul ; no book which I have seen exaggerates the offer from Rome to that extent. But de Dominis did have a nasty way of grasping at all he could get, and had once before made an absurd attempt to be installed as Archbishop of York. Tobie Mathew was in fact not dead at all but merely out to expose greedy and unlikely gulls like de Dominis who would immediately apply. At the end of act III the Fat Bishop departs, threatening to write books against the White House (III.i.343-344). At this point, the middle of the game, the Black House is definitely winning, having just taken the White King's Pawn (Cranfield) and

trapped the Fat Bishop. With the loss of Cranfield to the Black House "by default" is connected the loss of the Black Bishop's Pawn by the Black House ; the loss of the Black Bishop's Pawn is the beginning of the end for the Black House :

> For if it should so happen that the blacke King should lose his Bishops Pawne, for the gaining of the white Kings Pawne, yet the blacke Kings losse were the greater....
> (Arthur Saul, Famous Game of Chesse-play [1614], D3)

The White Queen's Pawn is still in danger, as the attack on the Black Bishop's Pawn has been countered with an attack on her. Before the Fat Bishop is actually caught and removed by the White Bishop and King in IV.iv, after his attack on the White Queen, he figures in the scene concerning the penitential taxes (IV.ii. 85-141), a richly satirical attack on the Catholic practise of taking money at absolution. Bald (edition, p.154) is inclined to believe the episode based on a forged Protestant version of the Taxae, perhaps that of du Pinet (1564). Looking over a genuine book of Taxes, Taxe Cācellarie apostolice & taxe sacre penitētiarie itidē aplīce (Paris, 1520), one finds an amount set down for a priest who might have castrated himself : "Dispēsatio pro presbytero presente vel absente qui abscidit suos testiculos. g xvi." (Fo. xxxviii), doubtless with Origen in mind. Hence Middleton almost certainly had a version which did not provide for castration. The Black Bishop's Pawn decides that homicide, for which absolution is available, is the only answer to his problem.

Of the other episodes in the play, the Induction with Ignatius Loyola and Error resembles the Induction to Middleton's own Michaelmas Term, and Ignatius' angry allusions to his delayed canonization may owe something to John Donne's Ignatius his Conclaue (1611), pp.132-135. Ignatius was beatified in 1609, and he says "Tis not 5 yeares since I was Saynted by 'em" (Induction, 15), perhaps indicating Middleton had a now-lost pamphlet, which printed 1619 for 1609, with news from Rome.

The Tract of Obedience episode in I.i.207ff. seems to derive from Robinson's Anatomie (Bald, p.140), although the reappearance of such a book as that of G.A.P., The rules of obedience (cited from the margin of a Protestant polemic) would be instructive.[36] This episode is as much a part of the main design as of the satire on the Jesuits, as it depicts the conflict between credulous but innocent righteousness and hypocritical, unctuous pseudo-sanctity. James had to be portrayed in these terms if the play was not going to offend him personally, and Middleton seems sincerely to have believed that Catholicism sanctioned unhealthy curiosity :

> for my desires
> Dwell all in ignorance, and Ile neuer wish
> To knowe that fond waye maye redeeme them thence
> (I.i.186-188)

says the innocent White Queen's Pawn. In this scene Middleton brings into play his old comic skills from the period of his child actors' writing, for the Black Bishop's Pawn would not be out of place in the company of the Five Gallants ; except that "the Iesuites devices are more refined ; this [the cozenage of Captain Gogge and his cheating companions] onely by the spirit of liquor and bond of roaring good fellowshippe, but theirs by pretended divine inspirations, visible messengers, and audible messages from heaven" (John Gee, New Shreds, pp.15-16). Middleton takes hints for their tricks in A Game at Chesse from various books and perhaps adds one or two himself. The burning of the Black Bishop's Pawn's "Intelligences" (II.i.221) is founded on a passage in A Declaration of the Variance betweene the Pope, and the Segniory of Venice (1606), p. 34, where the author describes a Scrinio or compartmentalized cabinet for despatches, a convenient place to keep all the matter one might want to burn at a moment's notice. The strict penances enjoined on the White Queen's Pawn at II.ii.290 may be founded on a hint in The Iesuits Downefall (1612), p.47, where the bread and water

36. See also Thomas James, The Iesuits Downefall (1612), *3^{v}.

punishment meted out for the smallest fault is referred to. Professor Bald refers readers to Rowley's play A Shoo-maker a Gentleman for a previous dramatic example of the "magicall Glasse" of "Speculatiue Vertue" (III.i.381-382) which reveals the disguised Jesuit to the White Queen's Pawn. Of course this source is a very likely one, but it would add some spice to the imposture if any in the audience had heard of Father Coton's "looking glasse of Astrology" mentioned on B2 of A Discouerie of the most secret and subtile practises of the Iesuites (1610), a glass which was purported to reveal all secrets. For the allegations that Jesuits went about attired like the bravest gallants if the need arose, Gee and James are but two of the anti-Jesuitical writers who say that examples are to be found at any time, Gee[37] actually specifying Holborn and Bloomsbury as a good place to observe them. James is especially indebted for his examples to the writings dating from 1601 and 1602 of William Watson. I mention such interdependent connections amongst the anti-Jesuitical writers to show how difficult it is to know exactly what is a primary source for Middleton's incidents and phrases in the anti-Jesuit subplot. One of the many books against Rome I examined retailed stories from Boccaccio as examples of the lewdness of the Catholic priesthood, without (I suspect) knowing their origin.

At the beginning of act five the White Knight and Duke arrive in the Black House, and are greeted with a Latin Oration from the Black Bishop's Pawn. G.R. Price[38] shows that this is lifted from A Iesuites Oration to the Prince, in Latine and English (1623). This turgid orator is rightly satirized by Middleton, who makes his praise seem even more fulsome by selecting two particularly high-flown pieces and adding a touch or two himself. At the Black House (Spain) Gondomar promises no fine banquets as in the White House or in Imperial Rome ; here Mid-

37. The Foot out of the Snare (1624), p.50.
38. "The Latin Oration in A Game at Chesse," HLQ, XXIII (1960), 389-393.

dleton is borrowing from Holland's Pliny. What he does promise is a feast of ambition, in a conceited speech about Europe being the larder to hungry Spain's imperial and universal monarchy. This speech so impressed a contemporary, Thomas Salisbury,39 that he copied it into a poem on the play, which Thomas Dawes in turn entered in his commonplace book.

Buckingham, however, is not satisfied with the satiation of ambition alone, but desires also to indulge his "infirmitie of bloud, Flesh-Frayltie" (V.iii.135). Gondomar tells him that it is truly the trifle of all vices, and cites Huldericus, Bishop of Augsburgh, as authority for the fact that six thousand infants' heads were once found in a fishpond belonging to a nunnery. The source here is ultimately An Epistel of moche learnIg (1537),40 although Southall believes an anti-Papist polemic of later date used it for an example. Finally, Charles, the White Knight, who has expressed no desire for lechery, admits he is an arch-dissembler. Thereupon Gondomar welcomes him for a brother, and the admission turns out to be true—he has deceived the Black House completely and given them checkmate by discovery.

A.H. Bullen, who added relevant source passages from Lampridius, Julius Capitolinus and J.C. Scaliger, wrote that he felt he had "not been able to grapple thoroughly with the difficulties" in illustrating A Game at Chesse.41 I feel exactly the same about my own attempt to place this final play in Middleton's work; it is in any case a unique play in the period, and had it not been written in such haste, it might well have been a great satire. In any case all the sources have obviously not been gathered in yet, but even so it is quite clear that the method Middleton used in composing this play was quite unlike that he used

39. See G. Bullough, "'The Game at Chesse' How it struck a contemporary," MLR, XLIX (1954), 156-163.
40. R. Southall, "A Missing Source-Book for Middleton's 'A Game at Chesse'," NQ, CCVII (April, 1962), 145-146.
41. Works, VII, 4.

in any other. To the end of his career Middleton was continuing to develop his methods ; he was never a playwright bound to a formula. With more formal education, more freedom from financial hardship, a period of development which began perhaps ten years before it did, Middleton might have rivalled Jonson[42] in his satire and Shakespeare in his tragic characterisation. In that "might" lie a number of strong reservations, not least of which is Middleton's predilection for sexual intrigue which bulks even too large in a satire against an order alleged to be libertines. In this respect A Game at Chesse is best considered a late comedy with living portraits rather than a pure lampoon.

It is not necessary here to go into the large number of documents which surround the first and only production of the play. As everyone knows, it was played for nine days together at the Globe by the King's men, 6-16 August 1624.[43] William Rowley's removal to the King's men was no doubt the factor which caused Middleton to work in conjunction with them on this occasion. If he was indeed gaoled as a rhymed petition seeking release from the Fleet suggests, he may have withdrawn altogether from playwriting into the safer occupation of writing entertainments and keeping the City records.

SOURCES

Main plot : Arthur Saúl, The Famous Game of Chesse-play (1614) ; Thomas Scott, The Second Part of Vox Popvli (1624) ; Thomas Robinson, The Anatomie of the English Nunnerie at Lisbon (1622) ; Pierre Gosselin, The State-Mysteries of the Iesvites (1623) ; ? Newes from Rome : Spalato's Doome (1624).

42. Jonson, however, thought A Game at Chesse a "poore English-play" (The Staple of News in Ben Jonson, ed. Herford and Simpson, VI, 334.).
43. So Bald, edition, p.19 ; or 5-14 August if one accepts B.M. Wagner's interpretation of contemporary letters. See "New Allusions to 'A Game of Chesse'," PMLA, XLIV (1929), 833.

Subplot : William Rowley, A Shoo-maker a Gentleman (1607-09) ; John Gee, Foot out of the Snare and New Shreds of the Old Snare (1624).
Other minor and less general sources are mentioned in the body of the chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Civic Employments, Masques and Occasional Pieces

Middleton was frequently obliged to accept other commissions besides writing plays, unlike the more fortunate Shakespeare. The reason for this was because Middleton never really settled down to working for one company after his plays for Paul's boys, and so never became a company shareholder. His civic work culminated in his being created Chronologer to the City of London on 6 September 1620. Thus in his later years he was obliged to keep "a manuscript journal of public events, parts of which were seen by Oldys more than a hundred years later".[1]

Middleton's first small piece of work for the City was a speech by Zeal in Thomas Dekker's The Magnificent Entertainment for King James' entry into London, 15 March 1603. It is probable that Dekker was encouraging the young poet by making space in his own pageant for the occasion, and also that Middleton learnt the rather mannered art of personifying virtues and abstract ideas from Dekker and the other poets who produced pageants for James' welcome.

In 1609 Middleton collaborated on a more interesting occasional piece, entitled Sir Robert Sherley, sent ambassadovr in the name of the King of Persia, to Sigismond the third, King of Poland and Swecia, and to other Princes of Evrope. Some copies of this tract contain a dedication to Sir Thomas Sherley, brother to Sir Robert, signed by "Thomas Middleton", but others contain a dedication to Sir Thomas Sherley, the father of the three brothers, which is unsigned. The overall implication is that the writer of the preliminary material is the editor and perhaps translator of eulogistic poems written to commemorate Robert Sherley's reception in Kraków, Poland, where he went as part of a general embassage to win military

1. R. H. Barker, Thomas Middleton, p. 20.

aid for the Persians against the Turks. Accounts of his splendid career through Europe were plentiful enough in 1609 : one posthaste from Italy gave a Vera relatione della solenne entrata, fatta in Roma da Don Roberto Scerlei Inglese. Juliusz Krzyzanowski[2] suggests that the encomia of the Polish scholars came into Middleton's hands from Sherley himself. He then goes on to indicate the precise nature of the editorial work on the tract : the Epistle, the address "To the Reader", and the "News from Persia and Poland" (VIII, 304-7). These serve as a lead-in to the following translations ; other additions besides these are the notes on Persian laws, manners and fashions (VIII, 315-17). Presumably it is Middleton who is picking up the narrative again at "Crowned with these praises as you hear ..." (VIII, 315) as the last leaden encomium tails off.

Robert Sherley is the subject of one or two tracts, but since Anthony Sherley was also in Persia a good deal, information about the country is also forthcoming in the more numerous tracts devoted to him. To show what Middleton needed to know for this small task, it is necessary to take the tract piece by piece ; in "To the Reader", it is clear that Sir Robert was expected in England at any time in 1609, just after his ambassage to Sigismond, until James I told him to complete his European mission first. In the end he did not come until 1611. Middleton must have received the Cracovian encomia almost immediately, but not from Sherley. The messenger was, in all probability,

> his agent Master Moore, ... lately arrived in England, bringing happy tidings of this famous English Persian, as also of his coming to England to the exceeding great joy of his native country, ... laden with honours through every kingdom, as the deserving ornaments of his virtue and labor.
>
> (VIII, 317)

2. "Sir Robert Sherley's Encomium," TLS, (12 August 1949), 521.

Moore might even have commissioned Middleton to publish the tract ; or Thomas, brother or father, might have offered remuneration. "To the Reader" betrays a slight knowledge of Anthony Nixon's The Three English Brothers (1607), which gives five pages to Sir Robert and includes in them some Tamburlaine-like exploits against the Turks aimed at freeing Sir Thomas, which sound wildly incredible. The "News from Persia and Poland" is of the most general character and suggests mere gossip ; then follow the tedious adulatory poems in translation. The source for all these and the Latin poem at the end of the tract, says Krzyzanowski, is Andreas Lechowicz's Encomia Nominis and Negocii D. Roberti Sherlaeii (1609), a tract extant only in the Ossolineum Library at Wroclaw. The original is in Latin throughout, but since Lechowicz was of Scottish origin, he may himself perhaps have done the renderings. That left Middleton to round off the piece, which he does in the most lively passage in the tract. He takes a brief glance at Persian religion, law, treasuries, junior military training, diet and dress, and mentions that he has seen Master Moore in Persian costume. Anthony Nixon's account of Sir Anthony Sherley contains a section on "Manners, Conditions, and Customes of the Persians" (H2), [3] which says something about priests and temples, rich materials and jewels ; but it is clearly not the source of Middleton's passage. Perhaps Master Moore gave Middleton all the details he needed, including a personal appearance in a turban "from which descends a rich fair pendant of some costly embroidered stuff, as tissue, &c.", and purple robes. He perhaps confused Middleton about the nature of the authorship of the encomia, for the dramatist refers to them as "speeches" delivered by "scholars" (VIII, 317) and attributes only the final Latin poem to Andreas Loeaechius (Lechowicz). This is a clear sign that Middleton

3. This itself is worked up from William Parry's less pretentious account, A new and large discourse of the Trauels of sir Anthonie Sherley Knight (1601).

did not have the task of translating them into English, if he was under the impression they had originally been prose.

Up to 1609, Middleton had been entirely concerned with plays employing English source-material. Then in 1611 he writes No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's, employing an Italian source for the first time ; thereafter Italian reading shows up in almost every play. There is an interesting link here : in 1602/3 Sir Thomas Sherley was captured by the Turks and taken as a prisoner, via Negroponte, to Constantinople. Sir Robert failed to rescue him and in the end 1,100 dollars-worth of ransom money was paid before he returned to Naples. All these places, together with Turkish rapine and payment of ransom money, provided details for G. B. della Porta's La Sorella (1604). If Middleton went to visit the Sherleys at all (and we should note that the tone of the address is familiar), he might have come across Della Porta's play. Since the family was multilingual, it doubtless owned Italian books. The significance of the link with the Sherley family has been overlooked and is perhaps instrumental in Middleton's change of direction at this period.

In 1613 the dramatist began his career as a writer of pageants for the City. Thomas Dekker had written his first Lord Mayor's show in 1612,[4] called Troia-Nova Triumphans, and David M. Bergeron[5] shows that this is the important influence on Middleton's first pageant, The Triumphs of Truth (1613). Mrs. S. H. Williams[6] alleged that the figure of Truth in Middleton's pageant was borrowed from Jonson's Hymenaei (1606), and cites closely parallel passages ; Cesare Ripa's Iconologia (1593, 1603, 1611) has the basis for Jonson's figure of Truth, but Jonson added details not in Ripa which found their way into Middleton. The Triumphs of Truth is easily Middleton's most elaborate show, and he

4. Details of shows are from Malone Society Collections, Volume III, ed. Jean Robertson and D. J. Gordon (Oxford, 1954), pp.xliv-vi.
5. Allegory in English Pageantry 1558-1625, unpublished Vanderbilt University dissertation (1964), p.105.
6. The Lord Mayors' Shows from Peele to Settle : a Study of Literary Content, Organization, and Methods of Production, unpublished University of London dissertation (1956), I, 225-6.

may have found that he had taken more pains and consulted more books than were necessary. "The gentle plot running through this show," writes Robert Withington,[7] "tempts us to call it a peripatetic morality-play ; it would be interesting to know what proportion of the spectators saw the whole thing. Probably few did ; hence the repetition of the "mist motif." It was, we may presume, a great temptation to a dramatist like Middleton to tell a connected story ; but the conditions of presentation obviously made this impossible."

Both Dekker's pageant and Middleton's have borne interestingly on the question of the date of Women Beware Women. F. G. Fleay[8] remarked that a statement by the Ward (V.i.7-9) must refer to Dekker's pageant of 1612. The passage Fleay means is on pp. 21-3 of F. W. Fairholt's reprint,[9] but Fairholt's note (p.183) to the effect that Giants like Ryot and Calumny appeared fairly often in the shows leaves us with just the allusion to fireworks. Fireworks, however, can be found frequently in accounts for the shows in Malone Society Collections, Volume III. Jackson I. Cope[10] proposed that Middleton mined his own pageant for 1613 for the imagery in Women Beware Women. Even granting that he did, it proves nothing about the date of the mining. Indeed, in 1626, Middleton borrowed The Triumph of Truth's opening declaration for The Triumphs of Health and Prosperity. But Cope's parallels are on the whole specious, and can bear very little weight indeed ; rather, it would be better that a known 1613-14 date for Women Beware Women backed the thesis.

The Triumphs of Truth was written for the Grocers' Company, and makes such detailed use of Dekker's pageant that Mrs. Williams[11] accuses Middleton of plagiarism. Some of the phrases are indeed lifted verbatim from Dekker :

7. English Pageantry (Harvard, 1920), II, 35.
8. Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama (London, 1891), II, 97.
9. In Lord Mayors' Pageants (London, 1844), Pt. II.
10. "The Date of Middleton's Women Beware Women," MLN, LXXVI (1961), 295-300.
11. Lord Mayors' Shows from Peele to Settle, I, 225.

> [Arete's] roabes are rich, her mantle white (figuring innocency), and powdered with starres of gold ...
>
> (Fairholt, p. 17)

> Truths Angell on Horse-backe, his Raiment of white Silke, powdred with Starres of Gold ...
>
> (The Triumphs of Truth, $B1^{v}$)

Vertue and Envy fight it out to a foregone conclusion in Dekker's pageant, much as Truth and Error do in Middleton's. Truth uses a six-line formula for quelling Error (VII, 256), just as Dekker's Vertue has a ready couplet to put down Error (Fairholt, p.23). Further, Dekker's use of a book to read out honours in the speech of Fame seems to have been copied by Middleton in The Manner of his Lordships Entertainment on Michaelmas day last ... at that most Famous and Admired Worke of the Running Streame from Amwell Head into the Cestern neere Islington (1613).

After 1613, Middleton's pageants come to seem very much alike. Robert Withington[12] suggests that "It is possible that the similarities which we find in so many of the civic triumphs are due to the fact that certain properties owned by the companies had to be used when one of their number was elected mayor ...." David M. Bergeron lists many of these similarities, and for much of what follows I am indebted to his excellent thesis.

In 1616 Middleton wrote Civitatis Amor for the occasion of the creation of Charles as Prince of Wales. This piece must have been well received, as Middleton now began to oust Anthony Mundy, his chief rival as City poet, bit by bit, until in 1619 he so far obtained the preference over the older man that Mundy as a pageant poet only appeared once more, and then as Middleton's collaborator. In 1617 the Grocers bestowed further favour on Middleton by allotting

12. "The Lord Mayor's Show for 1623," PMLA, XXX (1915), 113.

him the pageant for the mayoralty of George Bowles, which Middleton called The Triumphs of Honour and Industry. The Peace and Plenty figures which he uses had appeared in Mundy's 1614 pageant for the Drapers (Bergeron, p. 196), and Justice with her sword and balance seems once again to derive from Dekker's show of 1612.

Employments of a different kind came the dramatist's way after 1618. With the tragicomedies just behind him, he entered on a prolific period chiefly surprising for its variety. 1618 saw the publication of The Peacemaker, a piece which reads as if King James himself had written it. The familiarity with the Old Testament is rather surprising, but Middleton may have had to study the scriptures rather thoroughly at this time in order to turn out The Mariage of the Old and New Testament (1620). But he had other sources besides the Old and New Testament, which I[13] have not been able to identify. Rhodes Dunlap[13] discovered one of them, Bacon's The Charge of Sir Francis Bacon Knight, His Maiesties Attourney generall, touching Duells (1614), which accounts for parts of the pamphlet's fourth section. Middleton went to Bacon for special information on duelling. For some reason, he did not follow King James' Version of the Bible in the pamphlet, but instead kept to the Geneva version. One other quotation he used was from "Flamin. Consul.", i.e. Titus Quintius Flamininus, Roman general and statesman. Just where Middleton picked up Flamininus' remark would be hard to say ; no doubt, however, he was seeking to impress James with his choice scholarship. Near the end of the pamphlet he worked out a device rather in the manner of his City pageants, having six tribes placed under Mount Ebal to represent six vices, and six tribes under Mount Geresim to represent six virtues. As Dunlap shows, the king made this little book profitable to Middleton.

13. "James I, Bacon, Middleton, and the Making of The Peace-Maker," Studies in the English Renaissance Drama, pp. 82-94.

Middleton's first extant masque, The Inner Temple Masque,[14] was performed in January 1618/19. F. A. Inderwick observes that "it is claimed by the writer to be entirely original ["This nothing owes to any tale or story"] and intended for the "entertainment of many worthy ladies" who according to custom were, at the conclusion of the show, taken out by the masquers and danced with them". Fat William Rowley played Plumporridge, arch-enemy of John Newton's Fasting-day. The masque contained an anti-masque of evil days, which at least implies that the structure was not original. Middleton might have known of the Italian origin[15] of the anti-masque in a so-called Farsa of Sannazzaro's (1492) which has all the characteristics of later English masques, but I think it more likely that he was indebted to Ben Jonson once more. Jonson frequently used the anti-masque (for example, in 1617, in The Vision of Delight), and he introduced one "New-Yeares-Gift" into Christmas , His Masque (1616) just as Middleton has a character named "New Year".

The butt of some of the masque's humour is Thomas Bretnor, whose characteristic productions I have noted in appendix B. John Crow[16] says that "it will be noted that Thomas Middleton apparently had a copy of the 1618 Bretnor open before him when he was writing his masque." Of the inscriptions attached to the three Good Days, "Cocke a Hoope" comes from the 1618 Bretnor ; of those on the three Bad Days, all come from the same source ; the Indifferent Days take their inscriptions from Evil Days of 1616 and 1618 Bretnor. The device of the reading of an ironic last will and testament had already been used by Middleton in The Black Book (1604), and the costuming of the days in black or white or half-white, half-black looks both backward to Roman superstition and forward to A Game at Chesse. The actors who put on the masque were part of the Prince

14. A Calendar of the Inner Temple Records (London, 1898), III, xlv-vi.
15. The anti-masque began as a single fool : see John W. Cunliffe, "Italian Prototypes of the Masque and Dumb Show," PMLA, XXII (1907), 151.
16. "Some Jacobean Catch-Phrases and Some Light on Thomas Bretnor," Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies Presented to F.P.Wilson (Oxford, 1959), p.277.

Charles (1) company ; four of them later became actors for `the King's men. Inderwick does not mention any payment to Middleton for the masque.

In the same year, 1619, there followed another Lord Mayor's show by the dramatist, The Triumphs of Love and Antiquity. This one was in honour of Sir William Cockaine, of the Company of Skinners. Middleton's connection with Cockaine proved profitable, since Entertainments I and V of the ten Honorable Entertainments (1621) were later commissioned by him. Middleton went to history books to list important Skinners' company members of the past : "Seven kings, five queens, one prince, eight dukes, two earls, one lord ; twenty-four Skinners" (VII, 329). This idea may have been original with Mundy, as Bergeron suggests (p.213), for his Chrusothriambos (1611) has Time summoning up Lord Mayor Nicholas Farringdon from the tomb, together with a history of certain mayors. Again in 1614 Mundy introduced former mayors. Middleton consulted more than one history book, too, for he speaks of having "no records" that can show him when women first began to ride astraddle horses. In this little paragraph on Queen Anne, something of his troubled attitude to the emancipation of women comes out. They are able to "make this age blush" (VII, 326) with their impudence and immodesty. In short, when they usurp the provinces of men, they are licentious.

The dramatist was copying quickly, carelessly perhaps, for in relating the exploits of the Black Prince, he says that Edward "took the king, Philip his son, seventeen earls, with divers other noble personages, prisoners" (VII, 362). Holinshed, in the second volume of the Chronicles (1577), has a much larger number : "xvii. hundred Earles, Lords, Knightes, and Gentlemen" taken prisoner at Poitiers (p.960). Middleton also dipped into John Speed's The History of Great Britaine (1614) for certain facts, such as the amount

of meat that went to the lady mayoress after Edward the Fourth and the Lord Mayor had hunted together on one occasion. Another indispensable history book for a civic poet was John Stow's Survay of London (1598 and later editions), which had a section called "Honour of Citizens, and worthinesse of men ...", and another called "Temporall Gouernment", in which former mayors and their companies could be readily found. From The Triumphs of Honour and Industry (1617) to The Triumphs of Health and Prosperity (1626), Middleton made use of this list, often repeating himself if the show was for a company he had written one for previously.

In 1620 two more occasional publications by Middleton appeared. One of them was The World Tossed at Tennis, a lengthy masque written in collaboration with William Rowley. It was dedicated to Charles Lord Howard and his bride, Mary, eldest daughter to Sir William Cockaine. Evidently it was intended to be put on at Somerset House, which appears as the character "Denmark-House" in the Induction, but it was rejected, and put on by Prince Charles'(I) company in the theatre. W. W. Greg suggested that the theatre may have been the Swan[17]. As a result of the masque's rejection, it became an innovation in the theatre. Some solemn reasons have been put forward for the non-performance at Somerset House, but it is quite clear that The World Tossed at Tennis is an inferior piece. Scholars agree that Rowley wrote the Induction, the dialogue up to the entrance of the Starches, and probably all Simplicity's lines as well, since he played the part. Middleton wrote the rest, in which he managed to make attacks on the Puritans during the Starches episode and later in one of the protean disguises of Deceit; Rowley had already taken a passing fling at self-made Puritan scholarship in his part :

17. G. E. Bentley, Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 910.

> There's rabbi Abimelech a learned cobbler,
> Rabbi Lazarus a superstichious tailor;
> These shall hold up their shuttles, needles, awls,
> Against the gravest Levite of the land ...
> (11.95-8)

The variety of characters is bewildering : there are gods of Greek mythology, Old Testament worthies, abstractions, coloured starches and more or less contemporary types. The effect is one of ungoverned fantasy, and needless to say, it is displeasing. As for the masque's sources, I have never seen any suggestions made ; although Rowley has a crop of terms for figures of speech (11.118-28) which smacks of a text-book.

The other publication of 1620, The Mariage of the Old and New Testament, was undertaken by Middleton for influential city merchants of puritanical leanings. He dedicates it to Richard Fishborne and John Browne, two men associated with the circle whom he thought his anti-Catholic satire A Game at Chesse would please[18]. It is a satisfying little quarto, evidently paid for by its commissioners, for Middleton proudly announces his post of Chronologer on the second leaf. In 1627 it acquired a new title, Gods Parliament-House, but the sheets seem to be the same, except for some new running-titles, as the 1620 printing.[19] The 1627 edition has, in the British Museum copy, an "Epistle Dedicatorie" by one S. Collins which appears to have nothing to do with the text following. Middleton spends pp.1-6 rehearsing orthodox opinions on Old Testament prophecy of Jesus Christ's coming, taking care not to deviate an inch from the accepted line. He quotes from Bishop Joseph Hall, whom he calls "one of the most excellent singers in Dauids Temple". But this time it is not from one of the satires, but from a sermon called The Passion-Sermon, preached at Paules-Cross, on Good-Friday, Apr. 14, 1609. After the prefatory material, Middleton arranges Old Testament prophecies on his left-

18. See A Game at Chesse, ed. R. C. Bald, p.137.
19. A Hinman Collating Machine reveals that slight movement of symbols outside the margins occurred when the new running-titles were inset.

hand page and New Testament fulfilments of them on his right-hand page. Learned authors are cited in the margins : St. Augustine (in Latin), Theophilact, a Bible commentator[20], and Josephus, the Jewish historian. Josephus was available in the translation of Thomas Lodge, published in 1602, 1609 and 1620. Strangely enough, Middleton adhered mainly to the Bibles of his childhood, not King James' new translation. Many quotations I have checked derive from the Geneva version, some being slightly misquoted. Yet sometimes Middleton appears to conflate various readings : his quotation from Matthew 2:1 on C2 is mainly the Bishops' version with a phrase from the Geneva one. At other times he uses the Bishops' version as sole authority. It is all rather puzzling. The fact emerges, however, that Middleton did a very impressive job here, showing his ability to compare texts as he did in selecting historical material for Hengist, King of Kent. Still, his task was much simplified by the fact that these Bibles put the reference to the corresponding passage in the other Testament in the margin.

After 1620, the year of Middleton's appointment as City Chronologer, he became increasingly the City's poet. In 1621 a little octavo appeared with ten Honorable Entertainments[21] in it. The entertainments were mainly performed at the houses of Sir William Cockaine, a millionaire by Jacobean standards, and Sir Francis Jones, a Lord Mayor whose pageant had been written by John Squire. Entertainment VIII is the most successful with its goddess Flora and the four seasons. In the "2. Song, by the foure Seasons !" (the italic here gives the appearance of an announcement for a modern popular music group), Middleton has a list of flowers very like the one in A Game at Chesse, II.ii.39-41. Henry Lyte's Dodoens (1619) is doubtless behind this passage as well as the later one. In 1622

20. The BM General Catalogue lists him as Theophylact, Archbishop of Achrida ; Middleton might have consulted one of his Latin commentaries on the Gospels (1525 and later).
21. Ed. R. C. Bald (Oxford, 1953) ; see also his "Middleton's Civic Employments," MP, XXXI (1933), 76-8.

another piece was added to this group, but it was not printed until Bullen's edition. It was a dinner entertainment called An Invention ... for ... Ye Right honorable Edward Barkham, L. Mayor ... . There may have been others which have not survived.

All that now remains to be discussed are four more Lord Mayor's shows. From 1621-3 inclusive, Middleton took a hat-trick of shows, even having the ousted Mundy under his direction in 1623. We can now see why Rowley was increasingly asked to help with plays, and why a comedy like The Spanish Gipsy (1623) is so full of unsatisfactory plotting. In 1621 came The Sun in Aries, the pageant for the installation of Edward Barkham, a Draper. In this show there is a roll-call of past worthies of the company, and once again I find details of their deeds taken from Stow's Survay. There is a nice irony here, for Mundy was the man who "continued, corrected and much enlarged" the 1618 edition of Stow -- a copy of which Middleton may have consulted. Bergeron (p.215) suggests that the Hope of this pageant, expressed by a silvered anchor (VII, 348), derives from Spenser's Faerie Queene 1,x., where Speranza shows a silver anchor to the Red Cross Knight; and that the long figurative speech about nautical dangers (VII, 340-1) is imitated from Dekker's 1612 pageant.

The following year Middleton's services were again called upon by the Grocers, for whose Lord Mayor he wrote The Triumphs of Honour and Virtue. Here there is open copying from The Triumphs of Honour and Industry (1617), the dramatist's previous pageant for that company. Like The Magnificent Entertainment of 1604 for King James, this pageant presents the cardinal virtues as a group. In 1623 the Drapers employed both Middleton and Mundy, with the result that their rivalry produced two different versions of the entertainment by water[22]. Mundy being "Citizen and Draper" of

22. See Robert Withington, "The Lord Mayor's Show for 1623," 110-15 ; and Mrs. S. H. Williams, Lord Mayor's Shows from Peele to Settle, I, 141-2.

London, Middleton had had to put up with his assistance not only in the other pageant he did for the Drapers in 1621, but also in that for 1613[23]. This show was entitled The Triumphs of Integrity. It bears marks of Middleton's reading for A Game at Chesse (1624), for it mentions amongst other great commanders sprung from humble beginnings "the emperor Pertinax" (VII, 386). This man is mentioned at V.iii.29 of the political satire. There is a source-book for certain allusions to great men in A Game and in this pageant which no-one has yet identified, although R. C. Bald made an interesting speculation about the source in his note to the play's passage. Bergeron (p.125) says that the Beatitudes in this show were original in the Soper Lane pageant of 1559.

An entertaining glimpse of the learned poet busy with his charges is afforded by the Drapers' Accounts[24] :

> Item paide to M^r^ Middleton for the making of a Breake-/fast and fyer for the Children of y^e^ Pageants) iij^li^

There must have been a lot of children.

In 1624 the trouble over A Game at Chesse probably kept Middleton out of the city, and Mrs. S. H. Williams[25] suggests he recommended the task of composing the pageant be given to Webster, a man whose work he admired. But these were the last years of Middleton's life and prestige, the ending of an era which his work illustrates perfectly. For as a young man he had begun to write plays just as James came south to England, and he stopped writing them either just before or just after the king breathed his last in 1625. 1625 was a severe plague year -- it prevented any Lord Mayor's show being held -- and the plague very probably accounted for William Rowley's death.

23. Malone Society Collections, Volume III, pp.87 and 101.
24. Malone Society Collections, Volume III, p.106.
25. Lord Mayor's Shows from Peele to Settle, I, 143.

At any rate he was buried at Clerkenwell in February 1625/6. In the new reign, Middleton seems to have allowed things to go to pieces a little. During an enquiry about an elaborate welcome planned for Charles and his bride, to have been put on in 1626 but prevented by fear of the plague, it came out that there had been "abuses and badd workmanshipp in and about the contrivings and payntings of the Pagents."[26] Garret Christmas, Middleton's associate often responsible for the creation of the poet's pageant structures, came out well enough from the disgrace, but Middleton was not paid. In 1626 came Middleton's last mayoral show, The Triumphs of Health and Prosperity, again for the Drapers but without Mundy's unwanted aid. Middleton and Christmas were referred for payment to the Wardens of the Company because "of the ill performance thereof".[27] In the end, the two men did receive their pay. Perhaps they had come to treat their tasks as routine, and hence had grown careless. However, Christmas continued with pageant work after Middleton's death.

Some interest naturally attaches to this latest-dated work from Middleton's pen. Certain scholars hold that Women Beware Women dates from 1626 or 1627, and we find that both the play and the pageant have a distinctive image in common :

> rich merchants' wives,
> Good to make sport withal when the chest's full,
> And the long warehouse cracks.
> (Women Beware Women, 1.iii.25-7)

Compare :

> Fruit [s]overlade their trees, barns crack with (store.
> (VII, 405)

26. Robert Withington, English Pageantry, I, 235.
27. Malone Society Collections, Volume III, p.110.

ADDENDUM

Another source not included in my survey of A Chaste Maid in Cheapside has come to my notice. It is another version of the motif whereby the Country Wench gulls the Promoters in that comedy. It is a ballad called "The Country Girl's Policy", and is found in Vol. VII, 286-287, of The Roxburghe Ballads, ed. William Chappell and J. Woodfall Ebsworth, 9 vols. (London and Hertford, 1871-97).

The version found in all printed sources is undoubtedly later than Middleton's comedy, because of certain allusions in it. However, there is always the strong possibility that the ballad dates from a period more than a hundred years earlier than its printed form (ca. 1700). If so, it is quite clear that Middleton used it, for it has a good deal in common with the episode in the comedy. The ballad might have been based on the play, although it is hard to say why the veal in the basket should have been changed to geese if that were the case. I am inclined to think this is really the source, if it can be traced at an earlier date.

C. R. Baskervill has a note on this ballad in The Elizabethan Jig (Chicago, 1929), p.320, and he cites a version of the story to be found in Edmund Gayton's Festivous Notes upon Don Quixot (1654).

AFTERWORD

It will be seen from the list of books known to Middleton, appended to the Book-List, that he was not a man of deep reading. Sometimes he evidently acquired and read books to obtain certain information, but otherwise he read collections of tales or jest books. Of the eight books of novels I find he knew, four of them are in Italian, one Spanish and another possibly in Latin. He was interested, too, in astrological predictions and the lore pertaining to supernatural beings.

But Middleton's mind was not stored with rich learning or imaginative associations. Even when he set a play in Italy or Spain or Greece, he was content to think in terms of London and England. Consequently, his best effects are secured with simple language, unadorned by allusion or imagery of an exotic kind. At his finest, when he is not derivative of Shakespeare, Greene, Jonson or Fletcher, he displays inventive adaptation of the tales he had read together with a strong sense of retributive morality.

The story as I see it is one of a man who, neither brilliant nor learned, triumphed over his limitations and the theatrical conditions of his day, to produce comedy and tragedy which surpassed the work of the men from whom he took a good deal of his inspiration. Of course, Shakespeare is the exception to this statement, but it is to Middleton's credit that he understood the nature of Shakespeare's drama ; for there can be little doubt that he read and admired Macbeth.

A number of critics have felt that Middleton came very close to real distinction but in fact failed by the merest margin. The causes for this feeling are complex, no doubt, and amongst them I would number his birth and adolescence at the end of the great Elizabethan era, his broken education, his preoccupation with abnormal sexuality, his changes from theatre to theatre, and, perhaps, the influence exerted by inferior dramatists

like Dekker and Rowley on him. Yet we are left with at least one great comedy and one great tragedy, as befits the intelligent man who read Boccaccio, Cervantes, Machiavelli and Shakespeare in their own languages.

APPENDIX A

Some Plays with Good Claims of Admission to the Middleton Canon

A group of seven very different plays have found themselves at different times in the canon of Middleton's plays[1]; one of them has a claim dating from the seventeenth century, but the others have had to wait until more recent times for backers to champion their rights. A play like The Puritan, if deprived of Middleton's patronage, remains an orphan ; but a play like The Revenger's Tragedy is so popular that there is always another foster-parent waiting to gather it in.

Not all of the seven, however, can be said to belong in or out of the canon. I am referring to collaborated works where I think Middleton is distinctly playing second fiddle to another man. The first play in point of time is an example of this type : The Honest Whore, Part I, (1604), largely the work of Thomas Dekker. Philip Henslowe made an entry in his Diary some time before 14 March 1604 which ran[2] :

> Lent vnto the Company to geue vnto Thomas deckers & midelton in earneste of ther playe Called the pasyent man & the onest hore the some of 1604 } v^li

Not many scholars have been willing to give Middleton more than two or three scenes.[3] Fredson

1. It is worth noting here that despite the fact that Blurt Master Constable is greatly out of favour these days in the canon, Charles Gildon said, in 1699, that although Middleton's name was not on the title page, Kirkman made the attribution "on good Grounds!" (The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets, begun by Gerard Langbaine [1699], p.98)
2. Quoted from the edition of the Diary by Foakes and Rickert, p.209.
3. See R.H. Barker's table on p.163 of Thomas Middleton.

Bowers recently put the play in his Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker (Cambridge, 1955). The scenes allotted to Candido, "the pasyent man," seem to be his, or perhaps just the earlier ones. There is some agreement that I.v. and III.i. should be given to Middleton. I.v. has scarcely a sign of his familiar diction ; perhaps the lines

> And thats no Argument I am angry : no,
> The best Logitian can not proue me so.
> (I.v.114-115)

are a reminiscence of Middleton's Oxford days. Compare this from A Chaste Maid in Cheapside :

> 'Tis the easiest thing to prove a fool by logic ;
> By logic I'll prove anything.
> (IV.i.39-40)

III.i. has likewise little sign of Middleton, although the phrase "Spoke like a true Lacedemonian" (1.10) may be a mark of his hand ; Schoenbaum lists it as a Middleton idiosyncrasy.[4] The later Candido scenes (IV.ii., IV.iii.) have more definite indications of Middleton's City comedy—the remarks about men becoming women and vice versa, in "a mad world" (IV.iii.135), remind the reader of Follywit's transvestism in A Mad World, My Masters. One might add that the situation of the good-hearted mercer, his shrewish wife and a loyal apprentice called George is repeated in Anything for a Quiet Life, in what I take to be Middleton's part of that play. The Honest Whore was played by Prince Henry's men (Admiral's) on a public stage ; it may be taken to mark the end of Middleton and Dekker's first years of collaboration.

The next two plays, The Puritan and The Revenger's Tragedy, were in all probability written between 1604 and 1607. It would be astonishing if one man had written them both in that brief compass of years, but, generally speaking, those who have put the one into the canon have left the other out. The Puritan (1604-06) was attrib-

4. Middleton's Tragedies, pp.170-171.

uted on the title-page of the first quarto to "W.S." ; presumably the intention was to induce buyers to assume the play was by the best dramatist of the day. It was one of the plays released in 1607 in a sudden rush after the Paul's boys had to stop playing ; this links it with several Middleton comedies for the boy actors. Moreover, "the play uses episodes which appear in The Merrie Conceited Jests of George Peele Gent.",[5] a source which, as I have mentioned in chapter three, Middleton possibly went to for other comedies written for Paul's boys. Several scholars have attributed the play to Middleton : Dunkel and Baldwin Maxwell, for instance. Tucker Brooke,[6] however, was more cautious, perhaps because he had learned not to push inferior plays onto acknowledgedly good dramatists without powerful evidence ; in the end he leaned towards Marston. A.F. Hopkinson[7] in 1894 thought the play was Middleton's, and W.D. Dunkel[8] leaned towards him as well. As late as 1956, Baldwin Maxwell[9] still felt that Middleton was the likeliest author :

> The plot most certainly is one which would have appealed to Middleton. I know no author to whose plays The Puritan shows greater likeness.

Maxwell exhausted most of the likely approaches to the play, and reviewed many past opinions of its authorship ; even then he was tentative. For the reaction had set in ; in 1954 D.B. Dodson,[10]

5. Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 42. There is perhaps a mystery here : The Merrie Conceited Jests were licensed 14 December 1605, but not printed till 1607. But see David H. Horne, The Life and Minor Works of George Peele (New Haven, 1952), I, 117-121.
6. The Shakespeare Apocrypha, ed. C.F. Tucker Brooke (Oxford, 1908), p.xxxi.
7. The Puritan, ed. A.F. Hopkinson (London, 1894), pp.v-vii. Hopkinson's Appendix prints the extant sources (the two Jests).
8. "The Authorship of The Puritan," PMLA, XLV (1930), 804-808.
9. Studies in the Shakespeare Apocrypha (New York, 1956), p.137.
10. Thomas Middleton's City Comedies, p.131.

in a dissertation, said :

> Satire against the Puritans is good-natured, lacking the imputation of utilitarianism and carnality which is always present in the other plays. Accompanying this absence is the almost complete freedom from fecal and catamenial imagery, so common in Middleton's work generally.

In other words, Middleton's bawdy punning is absent. So mild is the play in this respect that Sidney Heaven[11] reprinted it in a stage version which schoolchildren could readily play. R.H. Barker[12] gave the parallels that were worth citing, which clearly showed that most earlier ones were not ; there are not many. He decided that a reasonable doubt must remain. Certainly I do not feel justified in treating the play here, since it is all in prose and nowhere near so sharp as Middleton's comedies written between 1604-1608. If there were any external evidence, I think there might be some justification for putting it in, but as the matter stands, there is very little.[13]

The Revenger's Tragedy is the subject of a celebrated controversy, too lengthy and hard-fought to go into here. The play dates from 1606-7, and is generally accounted a major achievement of the Jacobean stage. Fortunately for anybody trying to describe the Tourneur-Middleton war which set in after the 1950's, R.A. Foakes[14] has just produced an edition which succinctly guides the reader through the conflict, waged mainly in the periodicals. It is worth saying at once that the play has always appeared in the works of Tourneur, because of the

11. The Garrick Playbooks (London, 1955).
12. Thomas Middleton, pp.203-204.
13. There is an anecdote of a Puritan who lost his purse and resorted to figure-casting, ca. 1602-3, reported in John Manningham's Diary, ed. John Bruce (Westminster, 1868), p.42, which may have some relation to the play.
14. The Revenger's Tragedy, ed. R.A. Foakes (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), pp.xlvii-liv.

ascriptions to him made in 1656 and 1661 by Archer and Kirkman. These ascriptions are perhaps not worth a great deal ; W.W. Greg[15] investigated their value, and found Archer unreliable and Kirkman only just on the credit side for correct attributions.

The leading Middletonians (a convenient term for his champions over The Revenger's Tragedy) were Schoenbaum, Barker and Murray. By 1958 the able generalship of the first two had almost won the war, although Inga-Stina Ewbank (nee Ekeblad) had never been beaten on her own territory—imagery. It is safe to say that if Schoenbaum had not retrenched from his strong position of 1955, Foakes would have had to publish the play as anonymous this year. P.B. Murray[16] gave the Tourneurians a severe shock in 1964 when he came out for Middleton in a book on Tourneur. The whole controversy is made worse for a Middleton scholar because The Revenger's Tragedy bears a good deal of similarity to The Second Maiden's Tragedy (1611), the next orphan to be considered.

Samuel Schoenbaum made as thorough a case for Middleton as anyone in his Middleton's Tragedies (1955), but he is now definitely amongst the agnostics. Two statements[17] by him illustrate his revised views. With Schoenbaum's now neutral position, the Middleton cause has perhaps passed the peak of its success ; I cite R.A. Foakes' statement to justify leaving the play out of my source-study : "All arguments based on similarities, parallel usages, or habits of writing necessarily leave a final uncertainty, a further question to be answered" (p.liii). It is worth saying that the sources (printed by Foakes on pp.131-137 of his edition) bear no resemblance to the kind of material Middleton was using in 1606-7 ; and that the play's belong-

15. "Authorship Attributions in the Early Playlists, 1651-71," Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions, Vol.II, Pt.4 (1946), 305-329.
16. A Study of Cyril Tourneur (Philadelphia, 1964).
17. "Internal Evidence and the Attribution of Elizabethan Plays," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, LXV (1961), 102-124 ; Internal Evidence and Elizabethan Dramatic Authorship (Evanston, 1966)—this book is not yet out but it is clear that the controversy over The Revenger's Tragedy will be the centre of a discussion of the principle that "External evidence cannot be ignored."

ing to the King's men is the strongest point against his claim to authorship yet made.

The Second Maiden's Tragedy was never published in the seventeenth century. The manuscript has come down to us with three ascriptions on the verso of the last leaf. George Buc, Master of the Revels, gave the play its title on that leaf ; and a note dates the play 31 October 1611[18] and ascribes it to Thomas Goffe. Then a seventeenth century hand crossed out Goffe's name and substituted George Chapman's ; finally Chapman's gave way to "Will Shakspear", the correction of yet another old hand. The play belonged to the King's men.[19] Although Schoenbaum[20] says that the ascription to Chapman does not warrant serious consideration, the play has once appeared in Chapman's works (1875). Lately the Chapman case has been reopened by Leonora Brodwin.[21]

Schoenbaum[22] gives a list of the authorities before him who attributed the play to various candidates—Tourneur picked up five and a half votes out of a total of eleven, Middleton three. Massinger made a three-cornered fight of it ; but at the present time Chapman has come up powerfully. Goffe was too young and Shakespeare too good to have written it. H.L. Stenger[23] in 1954 and Schoenbaum[24] in 1955 made very strong cases

18. The leaf is reproduced in the Malone Society Reprint of the play prepared by W.W. Greg (Oxford, 1909).
19. Greg, edition, p.vii.
20. Middleton's Tragedies, p.185.
21. "Authorship of The Second Maiden's Tragedy : a Reconsideration of the Manuscript Attribution to Chapman," SP, LXIII (1966), 51-77.
22. Middleton's Tragedies, p.185. To Middleton's three votes we must add Schoenbaum's support, making one third of the total poll go to Middleton.
23. Harold L. Stenger Jr., The Second Maiden's Tragedy : A Modernized Edition with an Introduction, unpublished University of Pennsylvania dissertation (1954).
24. Middleton's Tragedies, pp.183-202.

indeed for Middleton. The Stenger thesis deserves some description, for he thoroughly investigates the sources and the candidates for authorship. The sources he describes on pp.37-77, and shows the main plot to have elements in common with three legends, the Ines de Castro legend, the Herod and Mariamne legend, and the Charlemagne legend. Each of these legends features a beloved woman whose body is adored after her death. The Herod-Mariamne story from Flavius Josephus and Talmudic legend is the closest, and is referred to in ll.1679-84 of the play. Both Massinger and Chapman show a knowledge of this legend, however (in The Duke of Milan and Monsieur D'Olive). The subplot is from "The Curious - Impertinent," chapters VI-VIII of book IV, part I of Don Quixote. The version the dramatist actually used is that by Nicholas Baudouin (Paris, 1608), entitled Le curieux impertinent, which has French on one page and Spanish on the other.

Stenger does an equally fine piece of work with the authorship, on pp.79-197, and has a list of sixty parallels on pp.376-394. The parallels with No Wit No Help Like a Woman's are especially convincing, since Stenger could not have known that that play dates from 1611, as does The Second Maiden's Tragedy. (There is an allusion to the execution of Ravaillac which shows the limits to be 27 May 1610 and the date of Buc's license, 31 October 1611.) Stenger takes Chapman, Massinger and Tourneur and gives their cases a hearing, then turns to Middleton at p.118. The number of resemblances of every sort—syntax, versification, parallels, characterisation—is staggering.

The very next year Schoenbaum treated the play in his book on Middleton. He did not do nearly so well as Stenger, since he knew no source for the main plot, but he too provided a list of parallels which were certainly good ones (pp.197-201). I must say I was all but convinced of Middleton's authorship, but the King's men connection remains a difficulty, as does the fact that Middleton was not writing tragedy at this time.

Leonora Brodwin does not attempt to bring up a set of Chapman parallels in opposition to

Schoenbaum's. She already has one of the manuscript attributions in her favour, and to this she brings a more sophisticated type of interna evidence : "While dispensing with the largely discredited technique of tracing verbal echoes in impressively arrayed lists of parallel passages, we shall want to consider as well the literary parallels of character types and character reactions, of theme and symbolism, and of stage technique."[25] Towards the end of her analysis of the two plots she makes a strong claim for the artistic validity of the play (p.71). Perhaps she ought to have asked herself whether the play is really good enough—when one considers the unactability of the piece—for a writer like Chapman in his middle period. But when she takes Schoenbaum to task for basing his attribution to Middleton largely on what happens in the subplot, she exposes very accurately the weakness of his case for Middleton. The chaste Lady is simply not the type of female Stoic Middleton ever portrayed : "In the figure of Cornelia [of Caesar and Pompey], ... Chapman shows his ability to create a feminine character with all the nobility of the Lady," writes Miss Brodwin (p.63). On the basis of this well-argued claim,[26] I have omitted to consider The Second Maiden's Tragedy in this study.

Wit at Several Weapons is really a nightmare as far as date and attribution are concerned. It was first published in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647, and again in the Second Folio of 1679. The Epilogue, written for a revival, suggests that Fletcher's share was confined to "An Act, or two." Who then wrote the rest, and when ? Beaumont, Middleton and William Rowley have been suggested, with Middleton and Rowley emerging most recently as favourites. Fletcher himself has lost ground.

In 1883 G.C. Macaulay[27] divided the play

25. "Authorship," pp.54-55.
26. Miss Brodwin makes one disastrous claim on p.75 of her article : that by 1611 Middleton had collaborated with or revised the work of Massinger, Rowley and Fletcher. This is simply untrue.
27. Francis Beaumont (London, 1883), p.196.

between Beaumont and Fletcher, giving Beaumont the larger share, but E.K.Chambers says he "retired on Middleton snd Rowley" in 1910. In 1901 A.H. Thorndike[28] still thought it probable that a part of the original play was by Beaumont. In particular the clown Pompey Doodle seemed to him Beaumont's creation. He favoured a date of ca. 1611-12. E.H.C. Oliphant[29] followed this lead, suggesting an early date of 1603 with a revision date of "1609-10 or later." After reviewing the attempts of other disintegrators to divide the play up, he went farther than them all in sharing the play amongst Beaumont, Fletcher, Middleton and Rowley. Middleton received the largest single share. Still, his evidence was rather lacking, both for Middleton and the other three. In 1960 Cyrus Hoy[30] brought linguistic criteria to bear on the problem, and divided the play between Middleton and Rowley, giving Middleton rather over one-half, but the clown Pompey Doodle to Rowley. But on p.91 of his article doubts beset him, and he began to feel Fletcher could not be left out after all. "It may be," he pondered, "that what we are dealing with in the extant text is a Middleton-Rowley revision, undertaken when the play was revived, of an original by Fletcher and one or more unknown dramatists." Anyone reading such a statement would be quite ready to throw up his hands in despair. In Schoenbaum's revision of Harbage's Annals the play stands in the year 1609, with limits of 1609-20. If Middleton was responsible for IV.i., as Hoy claims, he lists his source-books for Hengist King of Kent :

> Le' me see, there was none hang'd out of
> our house since Brute,
> I ha' search't both Stow, and Hollinshead.
> ... I'll see what Polychronicon sayes anon too.
> (IV.i.11-14)[31]

28. The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakspere (Worcester, Mass., 1901), p.87.
29. The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher (New Haven; 1927), pp.451-457.
30. "The Shared of Fletcher and his Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon (V)," SB, XIII (1960), 89-92.
31. Quotation from The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, ed. A.R. Waller (Cambridge, 1910), IX, 108.

I am confident that the play cannot be shown to be a straightforward Middleton-Rowley collaboration. R.H. Barker[32] says that "all one can be reasonably sure of is that Middleton himself had something to do with it." So, too, did Rowley, according to Oliphant and Hoy ; and, according to the older critics, Beaumont as well. Whoever wrote I.ii. (Rowley, says Hoy) praised the Scots for their conduct at the battle of Newport, but his collaborator sneers at the Scots accent in IV.i. A change in attitude towards James' followers seems responsible for this contradiction, so that I feel inclined to accept the theory of revision. As Emil Koeppel[33] found no source for the play, there is nothing to be considered in a source-study in any case. An undatable, revised play, with no known sources and an array of authors, Wit at Several Weapons has not recommended itself to a place in this study.

Out of the Beaumont and Fletcher corpus comes another contender for admission to the Middleton canon, The Nice Valour (?1616). This play comes nowhere near as close to winning a place in Middleton's works, however, as Wit at Several Weapons does. It was published in the Folios of 1647 and 1679, in an imperfect text. The hands of Fletcher and a second dramatist have been recognised from the earliest editors' times.[34] Early attempts at dating the play were bedevilled by Dyce's mistaken interpretation of an allusion in V.iii. to "Fisher's Folly." Baldwin Maxwell,[35] who has written the most important study of the play to date, shows that Dyce's date of 1624—to accord with the publication of a pamphlet called Fisher's Folly unfolded (1624)—for a final revision, may be ignored. Maxwell dates the play in the version which we now have as "late 1615 or during the first months of 1616."

Middleton had been nominated as the second dramatist by a number of scholars when E.H.C. Oliphant[36] wrote on the subject. He pointed out

32. Thomas Middleton, p.180.
33. Quellen-studien zu den Dramen Ben Jonson's, John Marston's und Beaumont's und Fletcher's (Erlangen and Leipzig, 1895), pp.61-62.
34. See R.H. Barker's table in Thomas Middleton, p.206.
35. Studies in Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger (Chapel Hill, 1939), pp.116-137.
36. Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, pp.439-451.

how short the play is, but did not draw the probable conclusion, which Maxwell did, that a clumsy curtailment had taken place after the play was out of the authors' hands. Oliphant thought the play was originally an early one dating from 1606 or 1607, by Beaumont alone, and that Fletcher and Middleton did not rework it till later. "As it stands," he concludes, "the play is almost entirely Middleton's" (p.450). But the essay lacks a methodical approach, so that it is never quite clear where Oliphant stands or how he has arrived at his position.

Cyrus Hoy[37] deals with the authorship in his methodical linguistic study of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. The scenes he does not give to Middleton he gives to Fletcher aided by Middleton. He admits the linguistic evidence in this case is well nigh useless, "not strong enough in itself to prove the play his" ; hence he turns to more dubious evidence of an impressionistic kind. His strongest point is the similarity of the situation in The Nice Valour, V.i., (in which the Cupid, the wife of the Passionate Madman, gives premature birth to a baby as the result of dancing and violent treatment by the Soldier) with one in More Dissemblers Besides Women. In that play Lactantio's mistress gives birth to a child as a result of a dancing lesson (V.i.). Middleton may, however, have borrowed the episode from the earlier play, just as Beaumont apparently used the scenes of the Passionate Madman and his Lady in The Noble Gentleman (?1619-21)—something Maxwell and Hoy feel can hardly be questioned.

Maxwell (pp.130-31) indicates a source for The Nice Valour in a contemporary incident concerning King James. This would apply to the main plot only, which is, as Barker[38] remarks, "a particularly flagrant example" of Beaumont and Fletcher's situations and characterization. It is thus conceivable that Middleton handled the subplot containing Lapet, the masochistic coward, and helped with the main plot. Yet before one

37. "The Shares of Fletcher and his Collaborators (V)," pp.92-96.
38. Thomas Middleton, p.207.

could condemn a man as guilty of creating the nauseous Lapet, one would have to have better evidence than presently exists. No significant linguistic data or parallels of phrase have been presented, and so it seems fair to let Middleton off from most of the responsibility. For all we know, he may have simply added and revised dialogue for an action designed by Beaumont many years before the two men ever met.

The six plays I have so far dealt with are usually treated in discussions of other men's works, with the exception of The Puritan, which is authorless if not attached to Middleton. Barker, however, treats The Revenger's Tragedy, The Second Maiden's Tragedy and Wit at Several Weapons in his main discussion as having significant Middleton writing in them. He writes on one other play of my excluded seven in his main discussion, Anything for a Quiet Life (c.1621). The external evidence for Middleton's authorship of the six plays I have excluded is almost non-existent, but Anything for a Quiet Life bears Middleton's name alone on the title-page of the 1662 quarto. Moreover, there is no evidence from the seventeenth century to contradict the assumption that it is wholly Middleton's work ; Dyce and Bullen put the play in their editions of Middleton. Then, in 1937, F.L.Lucas put the play in his edition of Webster. This was because H. Dugdale Sykes devoted a chapter in Sidelights on Elizabethan Drama[39] to proving that Webster wrote most of the play. Although Lucas[40] accepts the thesis, and so does Barker later, Bentley will have none of it.[41] Schoenbaum,[42] now having washed his hands of those unwarranted attributions in 1955, attacks the whole school of "impressionists" who think Anything for a Quiet Life may be largely Webster's.

My reasons for leaving the play out of this study are mixed. It belongs in the same category as I Honest Whore ; there are doubts

39. (Oxford, 1924), pp.159-172.
40. The Works of John Webster (Oxford, 1937), IV, 66.
41. Jacobean and Caroline Stage, IV, 860.
42. "Internal Evidence and Attributions," pp.115-116.

about its authorship, and there is, as far as I can see, no source-material to discuss. I am relegating the play rather than excluding it, because I remain neutral about the question of its being mostly Webster's. I must say, however, that Sykes' parallels with Sidney's Arcadia are convincing, and that Webster certainly mined that work thoroughly.[43] Further, it is quite possible that Webster's name was omitted from the title-page because Middleton wrote out the manuscript for the King's men, since he was the immediate connection. Middleton's name did not appear on the title-page of I Honest Whore, doubtless because Dekker gave the fair copy of the manuscript to the players, Middleton being already a children's dramatist. Lucas adds another argument that carries weight : he remarks (p.66) that "the subplot of Beaufort and Knavesbee's wife clearly recalls Westward Ho!" (1604), which is by Dekker and Webster. So it does. Mistress Justiniano, after showing some initial readiness to go to the Earl's bed, asserts her commonsense morality and remains chaste (II.ii.).[44] Her husband, however, is by no means so villainously depraved as Knaves-bee, one of those pathological cases who actually derives pleasure from the idea of prostituting his wife. Knavesbee is worse than Allwit of A Chaste Maid, who is simply a cold-blooded profiteer. Miss Margery Fisher[45] indicates some other sources for Anything for a Quiet Life. The sources she points out relate to the gulling of Water-Camlet by Franklin Junior and George Cressingham, a part of the play which all scholars agree should be given to Middleton. I do not wish to deny that Middleton was capable of conceiving a plot like that concerning Beaufort and the Knaves-bees, with its attendant sensational developments. At the late date of this play, however, (c.1621), Middleton was on the verge of much better work and was now all the time working with source-

43. See R.W. Dent, John Webster's Borrowing (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960), passim.
44. Webster wrote some part of the Justiniano story : see F.E. Pierce, The Collaboration of Webster and Dekker (New York, 1909), pp.26-32.
45. "Sources of Middleton's London plays," pp.291-93.

materials. Webster, on the other hand, had distinctly gone to the bad after earlier triumphs. It is not unjust, on the basis of the parallels which have been set out by Sykes, and the metrical evidence given by Lucas, to credit Webster with a good deal of Anything for a Quiet Life. I say this in full cognisance of W.D. Dunkel's[46] reply to Sykes and Bentley's hostile reception of the work of Sykes, Oliphant and Lucas.[47]

In rejecting these plays from the Middleton canon, I became very much aware of the injustice often done to the old dramatists by the gentlemen scholars of an earlier day. Not one of these early attributionist scholars settled down to trace the patterns of thought which each major dramatist clearly possessed. It may be objected that their approach was necessarily that of any pioneer : rather literal and obvious. Yet the sources offered a clear approach here : which authors could read what languages as evidenced by their signed works ? This approach was still neglected even after the upsurge of German interest in quellen-studien in the late nineteenth century. Now the critical books and the books which investigate the dramatists' methods of composing are coming out. In a few years a new species of attribution studies may well be possible. The record to date has not been distinguished by men who could handle large amounts of diverse evidence with skill and impartiality.

46. "The Authorship of Anything for a Quiet Life," PMLA, XLIII (1928), 793-799.

47. W. Power points out that duplication of names in Anything for a Quiet Life suggests collaborative writing : "Double, Double," NQ, CCIV (January, 1959), 4-8.

APPENDIX B

Weatherwise's Almanac and the Date of *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's*

"I warrant you," says Weather-wise of Beveril in Middleton's *No Wit No Help Like a Womans* (1657), "there has ne'r a new Almanack come out these douzen years, but he has studied it over and over." (III.i). He might have been speaking of Thomas Middleton himself, for Weather-wise is, as I shall show, directly created from several contemporary almanacs—that is, most of what he says find parallels in them. When he first appears in I.i., he opens his almanac before committing himself to any course of action :

> Stay, stay, stay !
> What comfort gives my Almanack to day ?
> Luck I beseech thee, good days, evil
> days, *June*, *July* ; Speak a good word
> for me now, and I have her ; let me
> see, the fifth day 'twixt Hawk and Buzzard.[1]

If Weather-wise had open before him Thomas Bretnor's *A Prognostication for this present yeare of our Lord God, M. DC. XI.*, and he turned past ... June and July and on to C1[v], he would find for August 5, listed as one of the Euill dayes, "5. twixt hawke and buzzard."[2] He quotes further :

> the sixth day backward and forward ; that
> was beastly to me, I remember ; the seventh
> day on a slippery pin ; the eight day fire
> and towe ; the nineth day, the Market is
> mar'd, that's long of the Hucksters I warrant
> you ; but now the tenth day, luck I beseech
> thee now, before I look into't ; the eleventh
> day, against the hair ; a Pox on't ...

1. References are to the 1657 octavo and to Bullen's edition, vol. IV ; in this case : Octavo p.15, Bullen p.295.
2. See John Crow, "Some Jacobean Catch-Phrases and Some Light on Thomas Bretnor," pp.250-278.

Weather-wise was still evidently perusing the August days : "22. Backward and forward." is an August Euill daye, "18.19. on a slippery pin." is an August Good daye. In August are found the rest, too : "27.28. fire and tow.", "13.14. against the haire." (both Euill), except "17.25.27. the market is marde", a July Euill daie. The first set of almanac references all come from Summer months, and I hope to show that Summer 1611 corresponds to Middleton's commencement of composition. The seasons play no important part in the comedy, and yet the references move steadily forward from Summer to late Autumn. If some design or time-scheme were intended, it can no longer be discerned.

In II.i. Lady Golden-fleece reports an interview with her pedantic almaniac suitor in his closet :

> Nay, and he led me into a Closet Sir, where he shew'd me dyet-drinks for several moneths, as Scurvigrass for <u>April</u>, Clarified Whey for <u>June</u>, and the like.
>
> (Octavo p.34, Bullen p.320)

Weather-wise had doubtless been taking the advice of Jeffery Neve, as given in <u>A new Almanacke, & Prognostication, with the Forraine computation, seruing for the yere ... 1611</u>, where under <u>Iune</u> he tells the reader : "This moneth of Iune vse clarified whay" and he urges "Purge well" in April—if scurvy-grass was indeed regarded as a purgative. (Alsemero, we remember, kept a similar closet; perhaps John Gerard's effect on the Middleton household was deep-reaching.)

In the same scene Sir Gilbert Lambston condescends, for the sake of appearing agreeable, to read out one of the legends or <u>poesies</u> on the zodiacal trenchers of food prepared for the banquet :

> <u>Now may'st thou Physicks safely take,</u>
> <u>And bleed, and bathe for thy healths sake.</u>
> <u>Eat Figs and Grapes, and spicery,</u>
> <u>For to refresh thy Members dry.</u>
>
> (Octavo p.36, Bullen p.322)

This is the poesie for September (as Sir Gilbert mentions), under the same month in Neve's 1611 Almanacke :

> Now maist thou phisicke safely take,
> And bleede and bathe for thy healths sake :
> Eat figges, and grapes, and spicery,
> For to refresh thy members dry.

Pepperton and Overdon, two more suitors, also enter into the game in Bullen's text, and Lady Golden-fleece and Overdon in the octavo. First, Lady Golden-fleece :

> Now gallant May in her array,
> Doth make the field pleasant and gay.
> (Octavo p.35, Bullen p.322)

Neve under May has :

> Now gallant May in his array,
> Doth make the fieldes pleasant and gay.

The month has changed gender and its area of operation been restricted, but the borrowing is obvious.

Overdon caps the half of the May poesie with half of the June one :

> This moneth of June use clarified Whey,
> Boil'd with cold herbs, and drink alway.

He has added a needed syllable to Neve's halting couplet :

> This moneth of lune vse clarified whay,
> Boyled with cold hearbs drinke alway.

Directly after all this preprandial persiflage has subsided, Weather-wise and his men serve in a zodiacal banquet. The form of this banquet is modelled closely on one of the almanac illustrations and depends on the reader's visualisation to bring out the savour of the puns. It is akin to Livia's chess-game in Women beware Women, which keeps up punning reference from board to bedchamber. On $A2^{v}$ of Neve's Almanacke there is

a rough woodcut of "THE ANATOMY OF MANS body, as the parts thereof are gouerned by the 12. celestiall signes." We may imagine chairs arranged round the figure of a man cut out in paper perhaps, with the signs for places at table. The signs were made of food or Banquetting-stuff, as the octavo puts it. The widowed Lady is requested to sit at Aries, the "Head Sign"—or "Aries The head and face" as Neve's diagram tags it. Aries, in the form of a ram, would be appropriate to a woman whose late husband had acquired a rich fleece by feeding off others' ruin. Sir Gilbert sits at Taurus, and -Weather-wise debates whether to sit at Leo, heart and back, or Virgo, guts and belly (Neve's labels). Sagittarius, the thighs, suits him best ; Mistress Low-water sits at Pisces, the Feete, to show how accommodating a gallant she is in contrast with the swaggering Bull. Her suit to the widow goes well, and in II.iii. she has eliminated the other suitors by boldness and subterfuge. Weather-wise on this occasion compares the men suitors' defeat to an eclipse :

> Nay so my Almanack told me
> There should be an Eclipse, but not visible
> in our Horizon, but about the Western
> inhabitants of Mexicana and Califormia (sic).
> .....(Octavo p.63, Bullen p.356)

He had evidently been looking into Neve to derive an inkling of some unspecified failure :

> The first Eclipse of the bright Globe of the sun, shall be apparantly seene on the 31. day of May, according to our account ... The duration of this obscuration, shal continue from the beginning to the ending, two houres and 46. minutes, vnto the Westerne inhabitance of Mexicana, with the adiacent Region adioyning, called Califormia, whose longitude ...
> (Neve, 1611 Almanacke, B_3^V)

(Notice the form Califormia, which Bullen modernised—was it the regular early spelling ?)

Every allusion so far has kept to the Summer months of 1611, and to complete the pic-

ture of Middleton writing during these months with almanacs open at his elbow referring to events exactly current, I shall leave consideration of the next astrological allusion till the end.

In III.i. Pickadille, a clown, blames Weatherwise for not foreseeing that June was an extremely poor month for attempting major projects such as the courtship of a rich widow :

> O Mr Weatherwise, I blame none but you; - you are a Gentleman deeply read in Ponds Almanack; - ... you knew this day the twelf of June would come when the Sun enters into the Crabs room, and all your hopes would go aside, aside.
>
> (Octavo p.112, Bullen p.419)

The reference to Edward Pond is a mis-lead, for the work providing this information was John Dade's A New Almanacke (1611). In the June table arranged in seven columns, we find :

> xii / b / Sol in cancer / Sagit. 12

Not everyone agreed about this : William Mathew thought the 11th was right for Sol's entry into Cancer, John Woodhouse the 13th. Pickadille is referring to events a little while past, and Weatherwise backs this up by referring to several evil days which were portents of the earlier failure :

> Look you here Gentlemen ; fifth day neither Fish nor Flesh....Sixth day privily prevented. ... Seventh day shrunk in the wetting.... The eighth day over head and ears.... The ninth day, scarce sound at heart.... The tenth day a Courtiers welcome.... The eleventh day, stones against the wind.... Now the twelf day Gentlemen, that was our day.—Past all redemption.
>
> (Octavo p.71, Bullen p.367)

The twelfth of June seems to have been the date Middleton has in his mind for the luckless banquet. These mottoes are all from Bretnor's 1611 Prognostication : the first two Euil daies occur

in June, the next two, euill again, are from March and May. Now references to the later months of 1611 begin : "scarce sound at heart" is a November Euill daye, as are the two given as the eleventh and twelfth days. "A courtiers welcome" is a December Good daye. Bretnor's Prognostication is produced once more when the crisis of imputed bigamy is upon Mistress Low-water in V.i., where the possibility of hanging is bandied about as the penalty : Weather-wise solemnly quotes

> Look you ; the thirteenth day work for the Hangman.
>
> (Octavo p.71, Bullen p.367)

This is an October Euill daie ; Weather-wise is shocked when it is not fulfilled. Mistress Low-water caps it with "make haste, 'tis time you were there then," the only poesie not from 1611 —it is not even listed in Mr. Crow's table. She obviously uses her quick woman's wit to non-pluss the humorous pedant. He finds solace in the fact that the Prognostication had not left him entirely without a hint if he could but have known it:

> Venus being a spot in the Suns garment, shows there should be a woman found in Hose and Doublet.
>
> (Octavo p.114, Bullen p.421)

Talking about eclipses, Bretnor adds :

> The beautifull Planet Venus will likewise be a spot in the Suns=garment the 2 of December at 3 a clocke & 6. minutes in the afternoone ; which happening in the 7 house neare vnto the Dragons taile, & in a square of the Moon, may very well pretend breaches and disloyalties in Wedlocke by the licentious and loose carriage of both sexes, much losse by women seruants, and many open and scandalous enemies.
>
> (B5^{v})

Some elements of the plot—"licentious and loose carriage of both sexes"—are suggested here.

Again this is a reference to events in late 1611. The Epilogue spoken by Weather-wise makes it certain that Middleton was speaking about a particular day in October 1611. John Johnson's Prognostication of 1611 fixes the allusion in the Epilogue to the 11th of October—also the date of Weather-wise's quotation from Bretnor about the hangman :

> Full Moone the xi. day at v. a clocke and 24 min. in the after noone.
>
> (B8)

Other authorities said it was to be dry and windy, good for the time of year. In the Epilogue Weather-wise consults his almanac for the last time—and finds full moon "just between five and six this Afternoon", and the sky "for the best part clear, / Save here and there a Cloud or two dispers'd." He looks also for the poesie for the evening, which is "fears no colours", again an October Good daye (28.29) of Bretnor.

A few problems remain. If Middleton really did finish writing in October 1611, the final allusion in the Epilogue is somewhat contradictory :

> The Planet's Jupiter, you should be jovial ;
> There's nothing lets it, but the Sun i' th' Dog ;
> ... The Signs in Gemini too, both hands should meet.

Jupiter was reigning in October 1611, to be sure,[3] but then there follows the statement about the hindrance of the "Sun i' th' Dog" and the sign in Gemini. Now the dog-days are traditionally associated with July, never with October ; and Sirius is not given in any almanac as a star with which the Sun could be in conjunction, opposition or any technical relation. Rudstone does speak of Alhabor, a star with relation to the Sun, as "the mouth of the great dogge Syrius" and Algomeisa as "the lesser Dogge" : their numbers were 8 and 11. The Sun was in a quartile aspect with Alhabor on 22 September 1611 and in conjunction with it on 21 June (Rudstone C2^{v} and

3. Thomas Rudstone's Prognostication (1611) has : "Iupiter glittereth northeast at Sunne rising." (October).

B8v). But the official "Dog daies" for 1611 were from July 19 to August 28, the Gemini sign reigning on July 24 and 25 and August 21 and 22. The Epilogue's ending cannot be reconciled with a date of October 11 for the beginning of it ; perhaps the desire to work in exhortations to applause may have affected the final astrological data.

To return to one of the "Summer" allusions left out earlier : in III.i. Weather-wise attempts to excuse his insults to Sir Gilbert at the banquet by claiming :

> Puh, Saturn raign'd then, a melancholy grumbling Planet, he was in the third house of privy enemies, and would have bewray'd all our plots ; beside there was a fiery conjunction in the Dragons tails, that spoil'd all that ere we went about.
>
> (Octavo p.67, Bullen p.362)

Saturn was in the third face of Aquarius in February, October and November according to John Dade's Almanacke, but not in Summer. 1611's second eclipse of the sun was forecast to take place on November 24, "the Lights then being in the 11. degree and 22. minuts of Sagittarius, neere Cauda Draconis". This information does not really clear up the passage though, and it does not explain why Weather-wise's house should be termed the "third". Yet the sign for the Dragon's tail cannot even be found in Rudstone's shorthand star summaries which come after his weather forecasts each month. The best sense that can be made is that this passage refers to a later month with regard to the "fiery conjunction" and is anomalous to the surrounding allusions.

Two further zodiacal passages remain for brief survey, in III.i. and V.i. In III.i. Weather-wise refers to 1638 and the dominical letter of G. In 1611 the letter was F, if proof were needed that someone had foisted in this passage ; I regard ll.266-290 (Bullen) as additional material from James Shirley's pen. In V.i. Weather-wise claims, by hindsight as usual, that his almanac had foretold the outcome of Lady Golden-fleece's marriage with a "beardless domineering Boy" :

> for now is Mercury going into the second house near unto Vrsa major, that great Huncks, the Bear at the Bridge foot in Heaven ; which shows horrible Bear-baitings in wedlock ; and the Sun nere entring into th' Dog, sets 'em all together by th'ears.
> (Octavo p.109, Bullen p.415)

Leo must be the sign near Ursa Major, and if so a glance at Dade tells us that Mercury went into the second face of Leo in August 1611, when the Sun was already in the Dog. Again Weather-wise is looking at events which had happened and speaking of them as current. Two plays from the pre-1642 period may give alternative answers to this muddled astrology ; the first is The Puritaine (1607), which at the end of I.iv. gives "yon Bear at Bridgefoot in Heaven" in a context suggesting a kind of proverbial usage, and perhaps it was the lure of this pun (on the constellation, the tavern, and Harry Hunks, a Paris Garden bear, who in turn suggested dogs) which drew Middleton aside from any consistency. Yet the phrase is rare ; it occurs in James Shirley's The Lady of Pleasure (1637), where in IV.ii. a non-astrological allusion is made to the tavern called the Bear at the Southwark end of London Bridge. And it was Shirley in 1638 who added at least one passage to this play, as has been suggested, and this one is again by no means integral to the action or dialogue. Yet the concrete detail of the "second house" bespeaks Middleton's borrowing from an almanac again—it does not sound like random invention.

Despite the anomalies, the broad lines of the debt make certain things clear : first, the previous conjectural dates of Bald and Barker may be set aside. R.C. Bald[4] guessed on stylistic grounds at "c. 1615 ", and R.H. Barker[5] put a backward limit of 1610 on the play with Beaumont and Fletcher in mind. The almanacs for 1611 would be on sale in December 1610, and Middleton could have begun work any time in the new year.

4. "Chronology of Middleton's Plays," p.43.
5. Thomas Middleton, p.181.

There was no special virtue in using 1611 almanacs ; therefore it probably means that they were the ones currently in the house. To keep the play topical, he mentioned eclipses and forecasts from the year, and probably finished writing sometime in October. The inference is that the play was on the stage some time soon after, in the early months of 1611/12 at latest.

APPENDIX C

The Problem of *The Witch* and its Sources

Many scholars have made the attempt to date Middleton's tragi-comedy *The Witch*, because of the incorporation of small pieces of material from it, or at least more proper to it, in *Macbeth* (ca. 1606), and usually with the unannounced intention of making it fit whatever hypothesis of relationship they were advancing. The school which believes in a date as early as 1609 is represented by W.J. Lawrence, Dover Wilson and latterly, John Stevens.[1] Their aim in defending this early date is to prove that *The Witch*'s failure in 1609 was directly responsible for the 1610 revival of *Macbeth*, altered to admit witch material from *The Witch* and thus to cut losses on a failure for the King's men. (No-one disputes that *The Witch* failed or that both plays belonged to the King's men.) The full hypothesis advanced by Lawrence and developed by Dover Wilson is summed up well by Greg and F.P. Wilson in their introduction to the Malone Society edition of *The Witch*,[2] and it involves assuming that Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens* (given at Whitehall on 2 February 1609) was the source of inspiration or commission of Middleton's play. In point of fact, it cannot be shown that the King's men took part in *The Masque of Queens* nor is there a case to make for the masque having influenced the play., Dr. Wilson speculates that proximity in production between *The Witch* and an altered *Macbeth* may be inferred by the desire on the part of the King's men to use the witch-costumes again, which rather contradicts Lawrence's idea that they merely borrowed the costumes from

1. In, respectively, "The Mystery of *Macbeth*" in *Shakespeare's Workshop* (Oxford, 1928), pp.24-38 ; the Cambridge edition of *Macbeth* (1947), pp. xxii-xxviii ; "Shakespeare and the Music of the Elizabethan Stage" in *Shakespeare in Music*, ed. Phyllis Hartnoll (London, 1964), p.40.
2. (Oxford, 1949), pp.vi-vii.

the Whitehall production for The Witch.

Greg and Wilson believe that "1609 or 1610 is as likely a date as any for the composition of The Witch" (p.vii). It is the purpose of this appendix to show that this guess is untenable and that the later dating of 1615 by Schoenbaum,[3] or 1616 by R.C. Bald,[4] is nearer the mark. It is then possible that the Macbeth witnessed by Simon Forman in 1611[5] may well have inspired Middleton to think about writing a witch-play.

A full consideration of the sources gives the clue to the solution of the problem. They are Thomas Bedingfield's version of Machiavelli's Florentine History for the main plot, and a dovetailing of G.B. Giraldi Cinthio's fourth novel, fourth day of the Hecatommithi with Cyril Tourneur's The Atheist's Tragedy (1611) for the sub-plot ; the three witch scenes draw their material from Reginald Scot's Discouerie of Witchcraft (1584) and from Virgil's Eclogues VIII. From the main discussion of Middleton's debt to Tourneur, it is, I hope, clear that Isabella owes a good deal to Castabella. Indeed, I would claim that Isabella is modelled on Castabella rather than on Frances Howard, the Countess of Essex. R.C. Bald[6] put the play's date at ca.1616 because he saw in Sebastian's scheme to prevent Antonio from consummating his marriage with Isabella, and in the charms which he seeks from Hecate to effect his purpose, a reference to the Essex divorce case of 1613. The parts played by Simon Forman and Mrs. Turner were not disclosed until the Overbury murder trials at the end of 1615. (It was in the Autumn of 1615 that the Countess of Essex's letter to Simon Forman was produced in court, in which she asked him to alienate by his magical philtres the love of her husband

3. Alfred Harbage, Annals of English Drama, rev. S. Schoenbaum (London, 1964), p.104.
4. "Chronology of Middleton's Plays," p.43.
5. "16JO" in Forman's ms. : see E.K. Chambers, William Shakespeare (Oxford, 1930), p.337.
6. "Chronology of Middleton's Plays," p.41.

Essex, and to draw towards her the love of the Earl of Somerset.) The Countess of Essex was a scheming minx and reputedly unchaste, and clearly would not be recognisable as Middleton's mild and loving Isabella. The reason for the prevention of consummation is not borrowed from Tourneur, I grant, but in fact it comes from Scot's Discouerie, Bk.XII, chap.V.

Thus we now have a backward limit of 1611, and no forward limit save the probable date of Ralph Crane's manuscript transcription, 1619. Middleton had written a dedication on that occasion stating that the play had lain in long obscurity, so that a date about five years before the transcript by Crane would fit all the known facts. There are a few observations worth making, however, which hint at 1614 as probably the right date.

The Witch has a number of the old comic devices which are afterwards absent. We find things like the preparations for Francisca's lying-in in II.iii., which possesses characteristics in common with A Chaste Maid in Cheapside's famous lying-in description at I.ii.10-56, and the "comic construe" of Latin by Almachildes in II.ii., a repeat of I.i.60ff. of A Chaste Maid when Tim sends a letter in Latin from Cambridge to his parents. For such reasons one hesitates to put the play far from the last of the City comedies, A Chaste Maid (1613), and certainly it is preferable to place it before everything Middleton successfully wrote for the King's men.[7]

One clue remains, but as yet it has not yielded to intensive examination. In II.ii. of The Witch, Almachildes enters with a charm he has obtained from Hecate in I.ii., consisting of a ribbon with which he intends to attract the affections of Amoretta, lady-in-waiting to the Duchess :

> Oh, 'tis the Charme her Hagship gave me,
> for my Duchesse obstinate Woman ; woond-about

7. I am excluding here the possibility that No Wit may be a King's men's play—the evidence does not warrant a firm conclusion.

> a three-penny-silk Ryban, of three Cullours,
> Necte tribus Nodis ternos Amoretta Colores.
> Amoretta : why ther's her Name indeed.
> Necte--Amoretta-agen, two Bouts,
> Nodo et Veneris, dic Vincula Necte.
> (Malone Society Edition, p.31,ll.724-30)

This echoes the Forman-Mrs. Turner business more than anything in the Sebastian-Isabella plot, but although seemingly unrecognised so far, it is the Latin of Virgil :

> necte tribus nodis ternos, Amarylli, colores ;
> necte, Amarylli, modo et 'Veneris' dic 'vincula necto'.
> (Eclogues VIII, 77-78)[8]

The surrounding text of the Eclogue provides the motif for the Almachildes-Amoretta action. Alphesiboeus sings a song relating the plaint of an unnamed maid at the coldness of Daphnis', her lover's, attitude ; she resolves to try magic rites to draw his affections (ll.64-68). The longing that will seize Daphnis will be unreasonable (ll.85-89) ; by the end of the song, the charm has already caused Daphnis to come to the maid. Just so Amoretta falls unreasonably in love when the ribbon is planted in her bosom. But what is the connection between this pastoral eclogue and Hecate's spells ? The answer is to be found in the contemporary commentaries on this passage ; Georgius Valentinus' edition of Virgil, published at Venice in 1624, for instance comments :

> Aut quemcunque superiorū ; aut Hecaten dicit cuius triplex potestas esse perhibetur. Vnde est, Tria uirginis ora Dianae.

And an edition of 1619 quite correctly notes that Virgil had transformed the Hecate of Theocritus into Venus, since the second Idyll doubtless inspired Virgil's eighth eclogue. Middleton's

8. Quotation from Virgil, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (London, 1940), I, 60.

mind already possessed this link when he came to need a charm such as Hecate might dispense.

Why did Middleton make the changes he did to Virgil's couplet ? In the first line he changes "Amarylli" to "Amoretta" to fit his character, and in the second "modo" to "nodo" and "necto" to "necte". As a result his Latin is barely sense, so that probably the scrivener Ralph Crane may be blamed for writing "necte" for "necto". But Middleton himself made the other change :

> Let me see what I can doe now.
> Necte tribus Nodis : Nick of the Tribe of Noddies
> Ternos Colores, that makes Turn'd Cullours,
> Nodo et Veneris, Goes to his Venery like a Noddy,
> Dic Vincula, with Dick the Vintners Boy.
> (pp.31-32, ll.736-740)

"Nodo" is made to translate "Noddy", so Middleton had a copy of Virgil which read "nodo" and not "modo". I believe the jest so weak that Middleton, having transcribed the passage for his charm just before, ran his eye over it to see what slightly humorous English it might yield ; I have no doubt that he would not have taken the trouble to alter the Latin, but would have found some "translation" to fit "modo", if it had been there. If this reading comes to light in a seventeenth century Virgil, perhaps The Witch's limits of date may be narrowed still more.[9]

The Macbeth that Simon Forman saw was certainly not added to as in the Folio, and another revival after 1614 and before 1623 must now be assumed if the new date, 1614, for The Witch is accepted.

9. Nicolaus Erythraeus' Frankfurt edition of Virgil, published in 1613, reads "nodos et Veneris" ; but after a search through a dozen Virgils ranging from 1589 to 1624 a reading "nodo" still eludes me.

APPENDIX D

Further Borrowing in A Game at Chesse

The list of books and pamphlets to which Thomas Middleton was indebted for his political satire was already long in R.C. Bald's edition of the play, most of which were there identified for the first time by the editor. Further items were added by G.R. Price (A Jesuites Oration to the Prince, in Latine and English [1623]) and by R. Southall (An Epistel of moche learnīg [1537], probably not an immediate source). Bald has a list comprising some thirteen works, scattered through his notes to the play, of which four , perhaps five, Middleton ransacked for actual phrases and proper names : Thomas Robinson's Anatomie of the English Nunnerie at Lisbon (1622) ; The Friers Chronicle (1622) ; State Mysteries of the Jesuites (1623) ; Thomas Scott, The Second Part of Vox Popvli (1624) ; Vox Coeli (1624). It is to this category that I wish to add a further list of verbal borrowings and reminiscences. Once or twice I quote from one of the books in Bald's list, because I have found a passage used by Middleton which Bald overlooked. I list the parallels as they come in the play rather than by chronological order.

The Induction : Ign. .... what Angle of the World is this ?
(1.1)

Compare : Those that are of religious Orders vow obedience to their Superiours, who may cōmand them to run to any Angle of the world, to the Indies.
(John Gee, New Shreds of the Old Snare [1624], pp.57-58)

The Induction : Ign. Dukes ? theire cald Rookes by some.
(1.59)

Compare : Likewise the Rooke is called of some the Duke....
(Arthur Saul, The Famovs Game of Chesse-play [1640], C7v)[1]

Induction : Er.. ... Le Roc the word, Custode de la Roche
The Keeper of the Forts, in whome both Kings
Repose much Confidence, and for theire trust sake
Courage and worth, do well deserue those Titles....
(ll.61-64)

Compare : ... we may allow them that Name, in the sence that the French seemes to inferre, by their denomination of this piece, which they call Le Roc, or Le custode de la Roche, (that is to say) the Rocke or keeper of the Rocke : ... So that although these Dukes seeme remote from the King and Court, yet in their substitution and trust on them reposed, they may be accounted in worth and power next to the King.
(Arthur Saul, Game of Chesse-play, C8)

Act II, sc. ii. : ... but for greatlie holie
There the soyle alters, fatt Cathedrall Bodies
Haue uerie often but leane litle soules ...
Like those big-bellyed Mountaynes wch the Poet
Deliuers, that are brought abed wth Mousflesh....
(ll.3-5, 11-12).

1. I was obliged to quote from the second edition ; Middleton of course used the 1614 edition. J.R. Moore, in "The Contemporary Significance of A Game at Chesse," p.766, mentions this book. Middleton also seems to have a reminiscence of Saul in Women Beware Women, II.ii.307 : "Your pawn cannot come back to relieve itself" ; Saul has "a Pawne is the soonest intrapped, because he may not go back to relieve himself" (E3).

Compare : But in fine, Ignace won thē al, as wel by long importuning them, as also by a million of Masses which he made his fellows say. These Cardinals did but dispute the question in general, touching noueltie of orders, without sounding the bottom in particular, to know whether these great votaries issued out of Horace mountaine, that was brought a bed of a Mouse.
(The Iesuites catechisme [1602], K1^{v})

Act II, sc. ii. : But there's no Marygolds that shutts
and opens....
(1.39)

Compare : Of Marigolds. ... yellow floures, somewhat strong in fauour, the which doe close at the setting downe of the Sunne, and doe spread and open agayne at the Sunne rising.
(Henry Lyte's trans. of Dodoens' A New Herbal [1619], p.116)
The flowers listed in ll.40-41 are all mentioned in this book.

Act III, sc. i. : Was it not I procurde a pretious
safeguard
From the White Kingdome to secure
our coasts
Gaynst the Infidell pyrate, under
praetext
Of more necessitous Expedition....
(ll.88-91)

Compare : E.6. Nor haue procured a gallant Fleete to secure the Coast of Spaine, against the Turkish Pyrates, vnder coulour of going to Argier and Barbary.
(Vox Coeli, p.57)

Act III, sc. i. : Whose policie was't to put a silencst
Muzzle,
On all the Barking Tonguemen of the
Time....
(ll.103-104)

Compare : wheras theirs are liable to accompt and hazard, and are musled for barking, when ours may both barke and bite too.
(Thomas Scott, Vox Populi [1620], C3^{v})

Act IV, sc. ii. : Thirtie eight thousand Soules haue
been seduced, P.
Since the Jayles Vomited wth the
pill I gaue 'em.
(11.76-77)

Compare : the number of soules which they haue gained into the bosome of the Church since the remission of the penall Lawes against them, and their freedom by my meanes obtained, amounteth to the number of eight and thirty thousand and odde.
(Thomas Scott, Second Part, p.18)

Act V, sc. iii. : Wee do not use to burie in our Bellyes
2 hundred thousand ducketts and then
boast on't....
(11.7-8)

Are these lines in allusion to Antony and Cleopatra, who spent "100 hundred thousand Sestertij" at a banquet, or to Clodius who "practised the semblable in two pearles of great price" ?
(Holland's Pliny [1601], Tome 1, p.257)

Act V, sc. iii. : The Golden-headed Coracine out of
Aegipt
The Salpa from Eleusis, or the pel-
amis
Wch some call Summer-Whiting from
Calcedon
Salmons from Aquitayne, Helops from
Rhodes....
(11.11-14)

Compare : As for example, the Coracinus in Aegypt carrieth the name for the best fish. At Gades in Spaine, the Doree or Goldfish, called Zeus and Faber. About the Isle Ebusus, the Stock-fish is much called for ; ... In the countrey of Aquitaine or Guienne in Fraunce, the river Salmon passeth all other sea Salmons whatsoever.
(Holland's Pliny, pp.246-247)
These fishes, togither with the old Tunies and the young, called Pelamides ...
... neare to Chalcedon upon the coast of Asia, there standeth a rocke, exceeding white and bright withall, which is so trans-

parent and shining from the very bottom of
the sea to the top of the water, that the
Tunies ... to avoid it, goe alwaies amaine
in whole flotes....
(Holland's Pliny, p.243)
For so it is, that the same kinds of fishes,
in one place are better than in another.
As the Pikes in the river Tiberis ... the
Elops at Rhodes, and so forth....
(Holland's Pliny, p.267)

Act V, sc. iii. : Cockles from Chios, franckt and
fatted up
With Far and Sapa flower and cock-
ted wine.
(11.15-16)

Compare : FVLVIUS HIRPINUS was the first inventor of
warrens as it were for Winkles ... Nay,
more than that, he had a devise in his head
to feed them fat, namely, with a certaine
past made of cuite and wheate meale....
that the gluttons table might be served
plentifully with home-fed and franked great
Winkles also.
(Holland's Pliny, p.267)

Pliny explains what cuit and wheatmeal are made from :

As for the Cuit named in Latine Sapa, ...
it is, but
Must or new wine boiled ...
As for the bearded wheat Far ...
(Holland's Pliny, Tome II, p.157 and p.138)

Act V, sc. iii. : Wee cramb no birds, nor Epicurean-
like
Enclose some Creekes of the Sea,
as Sergius Crata did
Hee that inuented the first Stewes
for Oysters
And other Sea-Fish, who beside the
pleasure
Of his owne throate
Got large Reuennewes by th' Inuentiō,
Whose Fat Example the Nobilitie follow-
ed....
(11.17-23)

Compare : Book X, Chap. L. "Who first devised to cram Hens". (Holland's Pliny, Tome I, p.297)

In those very daies, but somwhat before Orata, Licinius Murena devised pooles and stewes for to keepe and feed other fishes : whose example noble men followed ... Lucullus ... let in an arme of the sea....
(Holland's Pliny, p.267)

The first that invented stewes and pits to keepe oysters in, was Sergius Orata ... And this the man did not for his belly and to maintain gourmandise, but of a covetous mind for verie gaine. And by this and such wittie devises, hee gathered great revenues.
(Holland's Pliny, p.266)

Act V, sc. iii. : The ould bewaylers of Excesse in
those dayes,
Complayn'd there was more coyne
bid for a Cooke
Then for a warhorse, but now Cookes
are purchasd
After the Rate of Triumphs, and some
dishes
After the Rate of Cookes, wch must
needs make
Some of youre whitehouse Gurmundizers....
(11.37-42)

Compare : Certes, the consideration hereof ravisheth my mind, and carrieth it away to behold and wonder at those, who in their reproofes of gluttonie amd gourmandise, complained, that a cooke carried a greater price in the market than a good horse of service. For now adaies a cooke will cost as much as the charge of a triumph : and one fish as deere as a cooke.
(Holland's Pliny, p.246)

Act V, sc. iii. : wee giue thee Checkmate by
Discouerye, King, the Noblest Mate
of all....
(11.177-178)

Compare : Many other wayes may a discovery be brought to passe and oftentimes a Mate given by it, which is the noblest Mate of all.
(Arthur Saul, Game of Chesse-play, F1)

It looks very much as if Middleton was using a commonplace book in his composition of A Game at Chesse ; there is obviously a number of other lines which may eventually be traced to contemporary English books rather than to the first-hand Latin sources which Bullen's notes to the play cite. If Middleton did use Holland's Pliny why then did he make mistakes in copying the name Sergius Orata and in comparing the price of a fish to a cook's ? Perhaps , he wrote the extracts in a commonplace book first, and then misread it when he came to put some of them in his play. Obviously, then, he may well have misunderstood his note of Pliny's remark about the Coracinus and the Doree, the Coracinus being a black fish.

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